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THE SIGNIFICANCE OF MONEY  
IN THE NOVELS OF GEORGE ELIOT

by



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A THESIS  
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UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA  
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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies for acceptance, a thesis entitled The Significance of Money in the Novels of George Eliot, submitted by Gail McKill in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.





## ABSTRACT

In this thesis I discuss the significance of money in the novels of George Eliot, as a means of clarifying character and motivation within the seven works. Chapters I through VII contain individual discussions of the monetary themes which are prevalent throughout all of the novels, along with the attitudes of the characters towards money and possessions and their significance to the moral development of the characters in each novel.





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## INTRODUCTION

In his book, The Truth-tellers, Laurence Lerner gives one of his reactions to George Eliot's letters: "To read her letters is to be struck by her steady and open concern with money."<sup>1</sup> One passage in particular, from a letter to John Blackwood, gives evidence of this concern:

I don't know which of those things I care for most--that people should act nobly towards me, or that I should get honest money. I certainly care a great deal for the money, as I suppose all anxious minds do that love independence and have been brought up to think debt and begging the two deepest dishonours short of crime.<sup>2</sup>

Lerner is one of the few critics to note at any length the involvement with money which is evident not only in George Eliot's personal life but in the lives of the people in her novels. For her characters, money--or the lack of it--is a significant factor in their development.

Money is a means of power for several of the characters in the novels; the power may be political and far-reaching, as in the case of Tito Melema in Romola, or it may be petty and confined, as with Hetty Sorrel in Adam Bede. In Middlemarch, the banker Bulstrode, who sees himself as God's instrument, combines an Evangelical self-righteousness with his money to exert a moral as well as a financial tyranny over the community. Grandcourt, in Daniel Deronda, uses his money to buy obedience from his wife, as well as his servants, and takes a sadistic satisfaction in their subjection.

Grandcourt, like several other characters in the novels, tries





to use his last will and testament as a means of control over the living after his death. Casaubon and Featherstone of Middlemarch, who have nothing in common in life, are similar in their wishes to wield power from the grave. In the Dodson family of The Mill on the Floss, the will is a threat over their nieces and nephews who are expected to be thankful for the legacies that they will receive.

In the communities of the novels, there is a tendency to equate financial prosperity with moral desert. Squire Donnithorne and his son receive homage from the people in Adam Bede because they are members of an old monied family. The commercially-based society of St. Ogg's in The Mill on the Floss requires carriages, proper household furnishings and an air-tight will as indications of gentility. In Felix Holt, Lawyer Jermy and the Transomes are respected as long as their money and power hide their moral crimes. The dislike that people have of Bulstrode in Middlemarch is stifled by the force of his respectability which is founded on his financial power. Gwendolen Harleth's fear of poverty in Daniel Deronda is partially based on her equation of money and moral worth.

Although money is necessary for a good place in the societies of each of the novels, the open reference to money is often offensive to the sensibility of people like Esther Lyon, Lydgate, Rosamond Vincy and Gwendolen Harleth. Their attitudes toward money include an aesthetic sense that replaces morality.

Money rarely achieves good purposes in the novels, but many of the characters attempt to use it beneficially. Dorothea Brooke,



for example, tries to help others with money but almost totally fails; her character rather than her money makes a lasting impression on the conduct of people such as Will Ladislav and Rosamond Vincy. In other cases, like Daniel Deronda's and Gwendolen Harleth's, small amounts of money leave them free enough to practise their good influence.

When money in George Eliot's novels is gained by chance, it involves someone else's loss and becomes tainted. Gambling with fate, like Tito Melema, or depending on gambling at billiards to recover his debts, like Fred Vincy, indicates weakness of character. In The Mill on the Floss, Mr. Tulliver gambles with the law; in Adam Bede and Daniel Deronda, Arthur Donnithorne and Gwendolen Harleth gamble in their actions, and each subsequently loses. When these people learn to face their duty and to refrain from relying on fortune, they become useful members of the community.

In opposition to those who gamble and fail to earn their money are people like Caleb Garth in Middlemarch and Adam Bede who work hard and find happiness, not in the money they earn but in the fulfilment of a useful task. Daniel Deronda, Will Ladislav, and Felix Holt belong in this group, but their place is in public life where they can work for the good of society. Their roles are particularly important, because as George Eliot says in Felix Holt, "There is no private life which has not been determined by a wider public life" (III, 72).<sup>3</sup> Even great artists like Klesmer in Daniel Deronda are workers, as Gwendolen Harleth learns.





Money is equated with possessions and clothing by several of the characters in each novel. In Middlemarch, Rosamond and Lydgate insist upon the best furniture and expensive dishes, while in The Mill on the Floss, the character of each Dodson sister is defined by the type of possessions that she cherishes most. Clothes indicate the place that people inhabit in the middle-class setting which dominates most of the novels; the Dodsons, like Mrs. Bulstrode in Middlemarch, must dress well, but not too ostentatiously. Clothing is also an indication of the wearer's character, and the simple dress of Dinah Morris in Adam Bede, Dorothea Brooke in Middlemarch, and Romola, is an outward sign of their simplicity and honesty. They are contrasted with Hetty Sorrel, Rosamond Vincy and Gwendolen Harleth, who find great pleasure in dressing to enhance their beauty. For these women clothing is an extension of their egos, as is their love of good furniture and fine jewellery.

Besides indicating character, jewellery plays other parts in some of the novels. In Daniel Deronda it becomes a sign of Gwendolen Harleth's guilt, as well as a constant reminder of Grandcourt's power over her; to Tito Melema in Romola, jewellery is also connected with guilt and a past that he cannot erase. For Dorothea Brooke in Middlemarch, jewels are almost a sign of immorality, when she says, "What miserable men find such things, and work at them, and sell them!" (I, 18).

The influence of money often affects the development of character in George Eliot's novels, although it does not necessar-



ily determine the lives that the people will lead. Dorothea Brooke, who is born into wealth, overcomes its governing factors and leads a fulfilled life without the help of much money. Caleb Garth is poor, but he works hard and earns the money necessary for the well-being of his family. Gwendolen Harleth learns to use her money for good purposes rather than for power. For people like Lydgate and Bulstrode, money becomes a curse that, combined with their weaknesses, helps to ruin their lives, but their attitudes and not the money itself is their downfall.

The relationship between money and character is complex, and while for one person money may be a beneficial factor, for another it works as a demoralizing force. It is the purpose of this thesis to trace the various themes connected with money in George Eliot's novels and to show the importance of money in the development of character and moral attitudes in these works.





## CHAPTER I

### ADAM BEDE

Adam Bede, George Eliot's first full-length novel, already shows her concern with money. All the financial themes that she is later to explore in more detail are first developed here. In Adam himself we see the man who works hard and who earns his money in an honest and honourable way. Arthur Donnithorne is the man born into money who expects that it will always be present in his life and who believes in the power of money to solve all his problems. In Hetty Sorrel George Eliot creates the first of many young women who see money in terms of the finery and possessions that it provides. Her ego, like that of Rosamond Vincy in Middlemarch and Esther Lyons in Felix Holt, requires that everything around her should be a reflection of her personal beauty. Squire Donnithorne commands respect because of his money and his power over the tenants. Dinah Morris is one of the St. Theresas found in the novels who does good not through the use of money but in duty to her fellow man and in her compassion for the unfortunate people of Stonyshire. For Mrs. Poyser, as for so many of the characters in George Eliot's novels, money means little in itself, but is replaced by her love and care of the furnishings of her household. Her moral values are inseparable from a clean house in company with thriftiness and cleanliness.

Money has some meaning to all of the people in Adam Bede, and in the novel we learn very quickly what attitudes various char-



acters have to money and possessions. Our first view of Adam is within the carpenter shop in which he expounds his views of work, and his declaration gives us clues about his attitude towards money:

"I can't abide to see men throw away their tools i' that way, the minute the clock begins to strike, as if they took no pleasure i' their work, and was afraid o' doing a stroke too much." (I, 12)

Like Caleb Garth of Middlemarch, Adam Bede takes pride in his work and he cares about money only in so far as it is important to the small needs of his mother and brother; and it must be earned by hard work. When Adam's mother, who is concerned about money, frets about Adam, his brother Seth soothes her with the reflection:

"Think how he's stood by us all when it's been none so easy--paying his savings to free me from going for a soldier, an' turnin' his earnings into wood for father, when he's got plenty o' uses for his money, and many a young man like him 'ud ha' been married and settled before now." (IV, 63)

Any savings that Adam has been able to accumulate have gone towards keeping the family together and in keeping his drunken father out of debt.

The only real personal interest which Adam has in money is to have sufficient means to enable him to marry. We soon find out who it is that Adam would like to marry and what her attitude to money is. From Mrs. Bede we learn that Hetty Sorrel "... 'ull niver save a penny" and that she is a "bit of a wench, as is o' no more use nor the gilly-flower on the wall" (IV, 63). Later we remember the old lady's somewhat biased judgment as a fairly accurate picture of Hetty.

Adam, then, wants money only as a means of getting married to Hetty, so that he can provide them with a home separate from Mrs. Bede





and Seth. His concern is purely practical and is a key to his character as we see it throughout the novel.<sup>1</sup> It is interesting and important to note that when Adam comes to admire Dinah and finally to marry her, he is confirming his economic indifference, for he does not even have to think in terms of another place in which to live; Dinah is able to fit into the same household with Adam's mother.

For being virtuous and for his indifference to money Adam is not rewarded with an inheritance or with great riches. He already has a position of respect, and this is merely enhanced by his growing reputation as an honourable man within the community. There is some monetary gain when he becomes manager of the Donnithorne lands, but we see that the lesson in humanity which Adam learns throughout the novel is of more significance than the accumulation of money and respectability. Adam himself expresses clearly what he has experienced and learned, when he meets with Arthur Donnithorne after Hetty's release:

"I've know what it is in my life to repent and feel it's too late: I felt I'd been too harsh to my father when he was gone from me--I feel it now, when I think of him. I've no right to be hard towards them as have done wrong and repent." (XLVIII, 274)

As C. G. Ames says, George Eliot's "conception of virtue, or righteousness, is quite apart from all considerations of wages."<sup>2</sup> His statement can be seen in relation to her characters throughout all the novels. Will Ladislav and Daniel Deronda do not obtain great monetary rewards but they have satisfactory lives.<sup>3</sup>

Of equal importance with Adam Bede's relationship with money in the novel is Hetty Sorrel's materialistic orientation. Hetty is not interested in money itself but like Rosamond Vincy in Middlemarch,





in the things which it can give her: "She [cared] about the prettiness of the new things she could buy for herself at Treddleston fair with the money [the poultry] fetched" (XV, 232). "Hetty's world" is one in which

bright, admiring glances from a handsome young gentleman, with white hands, a gold chain, occasional regimentals, and wealth and grandeur immeasurable...were the warm rays that set poor Hetty's heart vibrating. (IX, 141)

Hetty's interest in possessions, such as the clean, cool equipment of the dairy and the mirror in her bedroom, are important only in their relation to her. The dairy provides a setting for her beauty, and the mirror vexes her because "it had numerous dim blotches sprinkled over [it], which no rubbing could remove" (XV, 223), preventing her from seeing herself properly in it. Her attitude provides a contrast with Mrs. Poyser's love of the furniture which makes up her household, where

the only chance of collecting a few grains of dust would be to climb on the salt-coffer, and put your finger on the high mantel-shelf on which the brass candlesticks are enjoying their summer sinecure.  
(VI, 105)

It is Mrs. Poyser's "elbow-polished" table in which Hetty admires herself when her aunt is not looking.

In the first half of the novel Hetty is identified with jewellery and with the daydreams of a girl who envisions a life of ease and pleasure in which she is the well-dressed, bejewelled center. Typically her dream appears in these terms:

Perhaps some day she should be a grand lady, and ride in her coach, and dress for dinner in a brocaded silk, with feathers in her hair, and her dress sweeping the ground. (XV, 226)





The economic security of her home with the Poysers provides her with the time to dream, but the irony of Hetty's way of seeing money, as an extension of her vanity, is cruelly shown in her flight from Hayslope when she discovers the true importance of money. In order to survive she must pawn the jewels which Arthur Donnithorne has given her.

In Adam Bede George Eliot does not use monetary imagery to depict character; rather, she describes the relation of each person to money or possessions directly and employs some symbolism. She uses jewels as symbols of Hetty and her soul, a device which she later develops more extensively in Romola, Middlemarch and Daniel Deronda. In the novel, the earrings that Arthur gives to Hetty are pearl and garnet, a reminder of the pink and white of her complexion which is emphasized in the descriptions of her. Hetty provides a contrast with Dinah Morris who wears no jewellery and who lacks affectation in her personality. Further contrast with Hetty is presented by the blacksmith's daughter, Bess, whose love of finery is more vulgar and at the same time more honest than Hetty's.

Each of the women in the novel has her own particular attitude towards money. Even Miss Lydia Donnithorne demonstrates such a concern, for through her choice of prizes at the races on Arthur Donnithorne's birthday, she provides Chad's Bess with her greatest disappointment, and Miss Lydia exercises the power of the complacent landed gentry over the economic longings of the lower class:

"Here is the prize for the first sack-race," said Miss Lydia, "...an excellent program gown and a piece of flannel."





"You didn't think the winner was to be so young, I suppose, aunt?" said Arthur. "Couldn't you find something else for this girl, and save that grim-looking gown for one of the older women?"

"I have bought nothing but what is useful and substantial," said Miss Lydia, adjusting her own lace; "I should not think of encouraging a love of finery in young women of that class."

(XXV, 415-6)

Miss Lydia's beliefs become readily apparent in reference to the tenants and the rest of "that class"; their poverty is a barrier that predetermines how much or how little comfort they are to have, whereas the gentry may indulge freely in luxuries. Like the women in Middlemarch, she sees class distinctions in the clothes that she and other women wear.

It is Arthur Donnithorne, whose typically kind voice has been heard in the above quotation, at whom we shall look in relation to rather different aspects of money than have been seen in connection with the other characters. Hetty's idea of a gentleman is based on one gentleman in particular, Captain Arthur Donnithorne. She sees him, characteristically, in terms of clothes and ornamentation. Arthur too sees himself in this way; however, George Eliot, early in the novel, has given us an indication of Arthur's weaknesses, which are excused by society, just as Fred Vincy's flaws are forgiven in Middlemarch, because of his expectations as the heir of Donnithorne Chase. The author hints, moreover, at what the result of Arthur's shortcomings will be:

We don't inquire too closely into character in the case of a handsome young fellow, who will have property enough to support numerous peccadilloes--who, if he should unfortunately break a man's legs in his



rash driving, will be able to pension him handsomely; or if he should happen to spoil a woman's existence for her, will make it up to her with expensive bon-bons, packed up and directed by his own hand. (XII, 185-6)

He does spoil Hetty's existence, and his "bon-bons" take the form of his great plans for Adam and Hetty when he finds that they are to be married.

Arthur is the young squire who must live up to his role. Throughout the novel he is concerned with the way in which he appears to his tenants; his whole economic orientation is centered on "bribery" in its broadest sense. He bribes his tenants to like him by wearing his regimentals to impress them; he plays up his generosity, taking full credit for it. Many of his actions stem from a need to be appreciated as a good fellow and to win everyone's approval, particularly Adam's and Mr. Irwine's, the Rector of Hayslope. Arthur's weaknesses become most evident in his conversation with Mr. Irwine, who has always been aware of the young man's shortcomings. Mr. Irwine indicates his knowledge of the kind of moral bribery which Arthur likes to employ, for he realizes the real motives behind Arthur's plans to give Adam a new position at Donnithorne Chase. As Mr. Irwine and Arthur prepare for the young squire's birthday feast, Arthur tells of his plan to surprise Adam:

"I mean to announce the appointment to them, and ask them to drink to Adam's health. It's a little drama I've got up in honour of my friend Adam. He's a fine fellow, and I like the opportunity of letting people know that I think so."

"A drama in which friend Arthur piques himself on having a pretty part to play," said Mr. Irwine, smiling.

(XXII, 387)







Mr. Irwine is fully aware that much of Arthur's goodness is bound up with his egotism, but even his critical comments on the situation are coloured by his liking for young Donnithorne, and he has little effect on Arthur's self-esteem.

Arthur uses the power of bribery in many ways: he gives jewellery to Hetty, and he bribes Adam to keep quiet by promising to write the letter to Hetty, severing their relationship. Irony is again evident in our knowledge of Arthur's thoughts as he plans the bribery to be used on Hetty and Adam when he returns home to find them married. While Arthur's mind dwells on his future plans, the reader knows that Hetty is about to be hanged for the murder of the child whom Arthur has fathered:

Nay, he would do a great deal more for Adam than he should otherwise have done, when he came into the estate; Hetty's husband had a special claim on him--Hetty herself should feel that any pain she had suffered through Arthur in the past, was compensated to her a hundred-fold. (XLIV, 229)

Here is Arthur's great weakness, and it is fully linked with his economic view of life. He believes that he can buy human approval and forgiveness; but he is not malicious about it, and George Eliot does not make him a horrible or repulsive character. What she does show is that the wrong attitude of men to money leads to disaster.

In Adam Bede George Eliot does not use gambling as an explicit way of indicating character as she does in Middlemarch and Daniel Deronda, nor does she use it as an image or symbol of the way that certain characters develop. Gambling is implicit in Arthur Donnithorne's attitude towards life, however, particularly as we see him deteriora-



ting as the novel progresses. In his relationship with Hetty, Arthur gambles in many ways: he risks being seen with her; he gambles in giving her jewellery; and he also risks lying to Adam about the involvement with Hetty. In each case Arthur loses and damages himself, Hetty, Adam and his society. George Levine gives a clear analysis of George Eliot's attitude to gambling:

Deterministic theory translated into the practice of her fiction became grounds according to which one might abjure coincidence and condemn chance. Nothing, she argued, happens accidentally, and a belief in the possibility of some kind of occurrence not usually produced by the normal workings of the laws of nature became to her one of the positive signs of moral weakness. Since similar events have similar effects (unless other causes are at work), George Eliot believed it morally reprehensible to rely on the unlikely or unusual, even if there is a remote chance that it might happen.<sup>4</sup>

Arthur Donnithorne, and many other characters in George Eliot's novels, fail to see the chances that they are taking in gambling with life, and as a consequence, their world crashes about them. Caleb Garth of Middlemarch is by far the wiser man when he makes his plans to help Fred Vincy quietly, not telling Fred about them before the outcome is certain. His wife is worried, however, and she asks,

"But suppose the whole scheme should turn out to be a castle in the air?"

"Well, well," replied Caleb; "the castle will tumble about nobody's head."

(Middlemarch, LXVIII, 244)

The scheme does become "a castle in the air," but no one suffers grief because of Caleb's refusal to rely upon chance. In a sense, then, the economic balance which is upset in George Eliot's novels by characters such as Arthur Donnithorne and Tito Melema is re-established by the





Caleb Garths and the Adam Bedes.

The plot in Adam Bede is almost as much affected by economic relationships as are the characters themselves. The economic divergence between Hetty and Arthur causes the greatest problem between them. Arthur himself states the problem:

To flirt with Hetty was a very different affair from flirting with a pretty girl of his own station: that was understood to be an amusement on both sides; or, if it became serious, there was no obstacle to marriage. But this little thing would be spoken ill of directly, if she happened to be seen walking with him. (XIII, 206)

Because he oversteps "this delicate economic barrier" between him and Hetty, Arthur Donnithorne precipitates the disaster which comes about, and Hetty suffers much more than he has been able to foresee.

Dinah Morris's whole contribution to the plot is centered in her wish to avoid any attachment to material comforts and desires, and in the end she must learn that domestic comforts are a part of life that she must willingly accept. In answer to Mrs. Poyser's plea that she stay with them at the Hall Farm, Dinah replies,

"Indeed it is needful for my own soul that I should go away from this life of ease and luxury, in which I have all things too richly to enjoy....It is a temptation that I must resist, lest the love of the creature should become like a mist in my soul shutting out the heavenly light." (XLIX, 285-6)

This refusal of "ease and luxury" is an essential trait of Dinah's character, and her denial of materialism presents an important contrast with Hetty and Mrs. Poyser. It is she alone who possesses the selflessness which is sufficient to bring Hetty to confess.

The crises in the plot which affect the Poyser's are a combina-





tion of economic and moral problems. The first time that they fear having to leave the Hall Farm results from Squire Donnithorne's wish to make more money. Mrs. Poyser expresses her ideas about the economic state of the world, when the Squire tries to convince her that any changes in the running of the farm will be of advantage to them:

"Indeed, sir, if it's anything t' our advantage, it'll be the first offer o' the sort I've heared on. It's them as take advantage that get advantage i' this world, I think: folks have to wait long enough afore it's brought to 'em." (XXXII, 84)

When a second crisis occurs in which the Poyseres see the possibility of their having to move away, Martin Poyser says implacably "I'm willing to pay any money as is wanted towards trying to bring her off, ... but I'll not go nigh her, nor ever see her again, by my own will" (XL, 190). Here the Poyseres put themselves on a moral level with Arthur, because they feel that financial help for Hetty will release them from any moral obligation to her. This attitude is similar to Bulstrode's in Middlemarch when he attempts to buy Will Ladislaw's forgiveness for a moral crime.

Adam Bede illustrates the importance of money to all classes of people, whether they are farmers like the Poyseres, artisans like Adam, or landowners like Squire Donnithorne. Although the community of Hayslope is remote from commercial areas, financial considerations are as much a part of the people's lives as they are in the city.





## CHAPTER II

### THE MILL ON THE FLOSS

In The Mill on the Floss we find a world different from that of the Bedes, the Povsers and the Donnithornes. Even the world of children is involved with and affected by the problems of money. At one point early in the novel we see children learning the economic way of life from their parents and using it within their own context. Tom Tulliver contemplates the idea of playing "heads-and-tails," and when he and Bob Jakin do play, Tom ends it by calling Bob a cheat. The whole scene is a childish parody of the quarrels of men over money. Both Tom's rectitude and Bob's common sense in this scene indicate how they will react to monetary and moral problems as they grow older.

In the center of this world are the Dodsons and the Tullivers. Inevitably a description of the members of these families in terms of character involves an analysis of their attitudes towards money and economics. For the Dodson sisters, possessions--linen, "chany," silver and carriages--provide a sense of security. All the sisters share a common Dodson attitude toward these material goods and they view life in monetary terms:

A Dodson would not be taxed with the omission of anything that was becoming, or that belonged to that eternal fitness of things which was plainly indicated in the practice of the most substantial parish-oners, and in the family traditions--such as, obedience to parents, faithfulness to kindred, industry, rigid honesty, thrift, the thorough scouring of wooden and copper utensils, the hoarding of coins likely to disappear from the currency, the production of first-rate commodities for the market, and the general preference for whatever was home-made....To be honest and poor was never a Dodson motto,





still less to seem rich though being poor; rather, the family badge was to be honest and rich; and not only rich, but richer than was supposed. (IV, 1, 7-8)

This is the creed of the Dodsons, each sister following it but with her own peculiar materialistic approach. From the first scene in which we meet her, Mrs. Tulliver talks of her linen and her "chany" with an emotion that is usually reserved for human relations:

"Well, Mr. Tulliver, I've put the sheets out for the best bed, and Kezia's got 'em hanging at the fire. They aren't the best sheets, but they're good enough for anybody to sleep in, be he who he will; for as for them best Holland sheets, I should repent buying 'em, only they'll do to lay us out in. An' if you was to die to-morrow, Mr. Tulliver, they're mangled beautiful, an' all ready, an' smell o' lavender as it 'ud be a pleasure to lay 'em out; an' they lie at the left-hand corner o' the big oak linen-chest at the back; not as I should trust anybody to look 'em out but myself." (I, 1, 10)

Mrs. Tulliver often dwells on the benefits of being well-prepared for death as though this were one means of taking her property with her; and like Peter Featherstone in Middlemarch, she and her sisters usually forget that they will not be around to enjoy either their laying out or the reading of their wills.

When Mr. Tulliver loses his law-suit and his senses in one day, it is with the idea of losing her possessions that Mrs. Tulliver is most concerned. The scene in which Tom and Maggie come home to find their mother sitting amid her possessions, while the bailiff waits below, is one of the most pathetic in the novel, and it is characteristic of this woman:

Mrs. Tulliver was seated there with all her laid-up treasures. One of the linen chests was open: the silver tea-pot was unwrapped from its many folds of paper, and the best china was laid out on the top of the closed linen-chest; spoons and skewers and ladles were spread in rows on the shelves; and the poor woman was shaking her head and weeping,





with a bitter tension of the mouth, over the mark, "Elizabeth Dodson," on the corner of some tablecloths she held in her lap. (III, iii, 317)

In this scene Mrs. Tulliver is inseparable from her dishes and linen, and the sale of them is like the loss of part of her own existence. For the people of the lower and middle classes in the novels, the idea of having the bailiff in the house or of going to the parish workhouse is one of the greatest disgraces possible. Rosamond's experience with the bailiff in her home in Middlemarch is the most bitter time of her marriage, and Hetty's greatest fear on her journey to find Arthur in Adam Bede is that she might be taken to the workhouse. Such a response seems to be a mixture of pride and a fear of being beneath others. Gwendolen Harleth's fear of poverty in Daniel Deronda is a complex variation on the same theme.

After all her possessions have gone, Mrs. Tulliver has only her children left, and at one point after the bankruptcy her relationship with Maggie is described in the following terms: "The mother was getting fond of her tall, brown girl, the only bit of furniture now on which she could bestow her anxiety and pride" (IV, iii, 40). Later Mrs. Tulliver clings to her daughter in the girl's disgrace because of the meaning that Maggie has for her. This transference of love from money or material objects to a human life is carried to a fuller extent, as we shall see, in Silas Marner.

The other Dodson sisters are also characterized by their material quirks. Mrs. Glegg changes the amount of ornamentation which she wears by suiting her "front" of hair to the occasion, and





her "fronts" become a moral comment on the situation:

Mrs. Glegg had doubtless the glossiest and crispest brown curls in her drawers, as well as curls in various degrees of fuzzy laxness; but to look out on the week-day world from under a crisp and glossy front, would be to introduce a most dreamlike and unpleasant confusion between the sacred and the secular. Occasionally, indeed, Mrs. Glegg wore one of her third-best fronts on a week-day visit, but not at a sister's house; especially not at Mrs. Tulliver's, who, since her marriage, had hurt her sisters' feelings by wearing her own hair....But Bessy was always weak! (I, vii, 78-9)

When Tom's schooling is being discussed, the "front" is frizzy and it reflects on the foolishness of an expensive education for Tom.

Mrs. Pullet's most prized possessions, because she has a rich husband and plenty of leisure, as well as a poor constitution, are her medicine bottles and prescriptions. Her predilection for crying adds to the humour of her description of her husband's bottle collection:

"Pullet keeps all my physic-bottles--did you know, Bessy?" said Mrs. Pullet. "He won't have one sold. He says it's nothing but right folks should see 'em when I'm gone. They fill two o' the long store-room shelves a'ready--but," she added, beginning to cry a little, "it's well if they ever fill three. I may go before I've made up the dozen o' these last sizes. The pill boxes are in the closet in my room--you'll remember that, sister--but there's nothing to show for the boluses, if it isn't the bills." (I, ix, 144)

This quotation illustrates the absurdities to which the concern with material goods can be carried in the Dodson family. All the women are concerned with clothes that must be good, but not too conspicuous; hats which must be hidden away from the light and from other eyes when they are not being worn; and lace which is both paid for and of the best quality.

The men who have married the Dodson sisters are all necessar-





ily in good financial positions and have gained their wealth slowly and carefully, so that they realize its value. Mr. Glegg is a retired wool-stapler, Mr. Pullet is a gentleman farmer, and Mr. Deane is involved in manufacturing and shipping. Their ideas of money are very similar to those of their wives. Mr. Glegg believes in

no humbug or hypocrisy....His eyes would have watered with true feeling over the sale of a widow's furniture, which a five-pound note from his side-pocket would have prevented; but a donation of five pounds to a person "in a small way of life" would have seemed to him a mad kind of lavishness rather than "charity," which had always presented itself to him as a contribution of small aids, not a neutralizing of misfortune. (I, xii, 187)

Both the honesty and the meanness of the families is illustrated here. The same financially-oriented kind of life exists for all these people whose characters are to a large extent defined by their attitudes towards economics. Their economic responsibility and respectability are the rocks upon which their houses stand while the sand-based homes of the Tullivers are carried away in the flood of financial calamity. For although the Tullivers are of the same tradition as the Dodsons, their belief

was carried in richer blood, having elements of generous imprudence, warm affection, and hot-tempered rashness. Mr. Tulliver's grandfather had been heard to say that he was descended from one Ralph Tulliver, a wonderfully clever fellow, who had ruined himself.

(IV, i, 9)

The ancestor is the historical precedent for the ruin of Mr. Tulliver, for he has all the characteristics of the Tullivers intensified by his hatred of Lawyer Wakem. The normal workings of nature and Mr. Tulliver's economic attitude, part of the Tulliver heritage, help to bring about his ruin.





For Mr. Tulliver, Dorlcote Mill is the property which money allows him to possess. His whole life is built around the mill, and this is another mistake that leads to the downfall of many of the characters in Eliot's novels: too great a dependence upon the lasting power of material things. Mr. Tulliver depends on keeping his mill; Silas Marner comes to count on his gold for companionship and comfort; and Mrs. Transome bases all her hopes upon Harold's possession of his estate. This clinging to material objects is an obstacle to relations with other people and breaks the threads of the web of communal life. When Mr. Tulliver loses his mill, his connection with society is so tenuous that he has nothing else to turn to, and his mind, in the scheme of things, must collapse. His return to consciousness and the kind of vegetable life which he lives afterwards are dominated by thoughts of revenge for his economic ruin. The two most powerful manifestations of his will before the end come in his obsession to pay off his debts. The first occurs when he returns downstairs and becomes completely conscious of the fact that he has been ruined. He refuses to forgive Lawyer Wakem for his part in the downfall, and he taints Tom's life by ordering him to write a pledge of revenge in the Bible:

"Write as you'll remember what Wakem's done to your father, and you'll make him and his feel it, if ever the day comes. And sign your name Thomas Tulliver."

"Oh no, father, dear father!" said Maggie, almost choked with fear. "You shouldn't make Tom write that."

"Be quiet, Maggie!" said Tom. "I shall write it."  
(III, ix, 419-20)





In this economic and moral crisis in the plot, George Eliot indicates the monetary attitudes of all three people involved. The father's attention is solely on revenge for the loss of his mill. Tom's comment reinforces our view of his character as a consolidation of Dodson and Tulliver blood; he possesses a capacity for revenge in combination with a calculating mind. Maggie rejects materialistically oriented values for those of human kindness and concern for her father's soul. The pledge that Tom makes is the legacy that his father leaves him. This pledge and the wills of the Dodsons are monetary signs of character which recur in wills in later novels. The basic ideas about wills will be discussed more fully in the chapter on Middlemarch.

Both Tom and Maggie are affected by the mercenary outlooks of their family, but each reacts in a different way and each suffers for the intensity of that reaction. Tom's future is hinted at even when he is merely a boy:

Tom was only thirteen, and had no decided views in grammar and arithmetic, regarding them for the most part as open questions, but he was particularly clear and positive on one point--namely, that he would punish everybody who deserved it: why, he wouldn't have minded being punished himself, if he deserved it; but, then, he never did deserve it. (I, v, 53)

When this attitude is translated into economic terms as Tom reaches the age of sixteen and his father is ruined, his reaction to his father's wish to punish Lawyer Waken becomes clear. Tom's sense of rectitude demands that he earn the money to regain his father's respectability in the eyes of the community and to free his father,





in part, from any moral or monetary debt to Wakem; he becomes the human equivalent of a money-making machine. In the end he is redeemed only through his love for Maggie.

A part of the attraction which Maggie holds for us is that she provides such a vivid contrast with the other characters in the book. Her passionate, loving nature demands none of the comforts of life, but rather the presence of human beings who will accept her love and return it. In a community like St. Ogg's which is centered upon economic interests, she faces constant disillusionment. The first occurs when she has run away from home to live with the gypsies, after pushing her cousin, Lucy Deane, in the mud. Her view of gypsies has been reminiscent of the concept of the noble savage, but when she does find gypsies, her efforts to show them her "superior knowledge" fail and she is finally disillusioned. Characteristically, she romanticizes her changed opinion:

Her ideas about gypsies had undergone a rapid modification in the last five minutes. From having considered them very respectable companions, amenable to instruction, she had begun to think that they meant perhaps to kill her as soon as it was dark, and cut up her body for gradual cooking. (I, xi, 172)

Disillusionment becomes a way of life for Maggie because she fails to recognize that she is within a society governed by a respectability resting on monetary values. Her greatness of soul does not fit into the smallness of the community's mind, just as Dorothea Brooke's compassion fails to conform to Middlemarch society. Lucy Deane, the cousin to whom Maggie is always compared, is much more suited in her small, neat, compliant way to society's demands. One





of the most important scenes in the book, just before Maggie meets Stephen Guest, shows the contrast between Lucy and her; the one girl small, blonde, and neutral in character; the other, tall, in shabby clothes, with a passionate nature. The brooches which they exchange act as symbols of the two girls. Lucy is light and fragile like the butterfly, with little of Maggie's passion; Maggie is like the large jet brooch with its dark depths, which Stephen finds duplicated in her eyes and which we know reflects the depth of her soul. The conversation between the two girls adds to the suggestiveness of the two brooches. Maggie calls Lucy a "dear, tiny thing," and Lucy comments on Maggie's depression and melancholy, which are reflected in the darkness of the brooch.

Maggie, then, is closely connected with the world of money, but she is not a committed member of the working community to which the Dodsons and Tom belong. She struggles hopelessly against this world rather than building her life on it. This is the reason, perhaps, for Maggie's connection with nature and animal imagery in the novel. The current of Maggie's life acts in the same way as the river that men attempt to control. Man-made restraints, such as curled hair, silk dresses, the respectability of monied families, even the denials of a Thomas à Kempis may bind her for a while, but the prediction made by Philip Wakem during a rendez-vous with Maggie in the Red Deeps will finally come true.

"Maggie," he said, in a tone of remonstrance, "don't persist in this wilful, senseless privation. It makes me wretched to see you benumbing and cramping your nature in this way."





"I shall have strength given me," said Maggie, tremulously.

"No, you will not, Maggie: no one has strength given to do what is unnatural. It is mere cowardice to seek safety in negations. No character becomes strong in that way. You will be thrown into the world some day, and then every rational satisfaction of your nature that you deny now, will assault you like a savage appetite."  
(V, iii, 96-7)

Because she does not possess the Dodson trait that bases its restraint on financial calculating, her true nature shows itself when she meets Stephen Guest, and the actions which she takes then are all part of the "savage appetite" which she has tried to hold in abeyance.

Maggie, like Dorothea Brooke, is another St. Theresa, but she does not possess the money that Dorothea has to compensate for her untimely birth. Many of the problems which she encounters and which lead directly or indirectly to her disaster are affected by her economic position. Tom is able to cope with his problems because he has the necessary mental inheritance of the Tullivers and the Dodsons to live, however gloomily, within the framework of a commercial society. Maggie has the passion and impulsiveness of the Tullivers without the Dodson control, and it is significant that at one point she is likened to her Aunt Moss, who is economically unstable. The Dodson aunts make the comparison:

As for Maggie, she was the picture of her aunt Moss, Mr. Tulliver's sister, --a large-boned woman, who had married as poorly as could be; had no china, and had a husband who had much ado to pay his rent. (I, vii, 89)

In the Dodson world, the resemblance between Maggie and her aunt denotes disaster, and in the terms of their financial orientation





the Dodsons are correct in their evaluation.

Throughout The Mill on the Floss life is rendered in terms of money, wills, securities and debt. The latter is a sign of an inability to come to terms with society and is used almost solely in connection with Mr. Tulliver. Gambling has been mentioned as one of his weaknesses, and he suffers for the chances which he takes with fortune. His attitude is shown by Jerome Thale in contrast with that of the Dodsons:

The Dodsons see contingency and chance in the world, but they overestimate the danger and challenge of them, they are terrified by them and sacrifice the freedom of acting for the security of not taking risk. This view of the world shows up in economics, which is a kind of metaphor for the whole attitude; the Dodsons are willing to accept low-interest-bearing notes that are safe. Within the code there is no danger of risk, everything is taken care of through the crushing of passion and of the self. This is why they feel superior when Tulliver goes bankrupt.<sup>1</sup>

It is Mr. Tulliver's rashness that prevents him from following the Dodson code.

The great crises of the novel, with the exception of Maggie's and Stephen's elopement, are centered on financial problems. Mr. Tulliver's whole involvement with Lawyer Wakem rests on economic grounds in conjunction with his revenge motive. The lives of all the Tullivers are changed by Mr. Tulliver's financial ruin, and the full split between Tom and Maggie begins with the disparity in the ways that they react to the curse made by their father: Tom carries it out to the letter, and Maggie secretly befriends the son of her father's enemy.

Even the weakness in Stephen Guest is partially a result of





his upbringing as a rich young gentleman of St. Ogg's. His whole careless attitude, as I think George Eliot wishes to indicate in the following description of Stephen, is bound up with the way of life he has chosen. Stephen is spending the morning in Lucy Deane's drawing room as the suitor whom everyone, including himself, expects to marry Lucy. After a description of her, the author says that

the fine young man who is leaning down from his chair to snap the scissors in the extremely abbreviated face of the "King Charles" lying on the young lady's feet, is no other than Mr. Stephen Guest, whose diamond ring, attar of roses, and air of nonchalant leisure, at twelve o'clock in the day, are the graceful and odoriferous result of the largest oil-mill and the most extensive wharf in St. Ogg's.

(VI, i, 149)

Stephen's character is a reflection of the life that he leads. He has no cares and his father's money makes the way smooth for him. He possesses the charm of Arthur Donnithorne in Adam Bede and the indifference of a younger Grandcourt in Daniel Deronda. Until he meets Maggie, Stephen's life is fully mapped out for him and he has accepted his place in the economic world.

Maggie shatters Stephen's complacency just as Dorothea Brooke changes Will Ladislav's in Middlemarch. No belief in the power of money or in any other economic ideas can save him from succumbing to Maggie's attractions. His elopement with her is a throwing off of all convention, financial and moral, with which Stephen has bound his life before; it brings disaster, but it also indicates Stephen's growth of character, just as Will Ladislav's ability to reject Casaubon's money indicates his new attitude.

The Wakems, father and son, are a part of the financial





community, particularly Mr. Wakem as the lawyer and antagonist in Mr. Tulliver's life. All the financial problems that the Tullivers face are blamed on Wakem; he is the force for evil in Mr. Tulliver's "rampant Manichaeism," the miller's explanation for the existence of men like Wakem in the world<sup>2</sup> Although we are not encouraged to take Mr. Tulliver's attitude towards Wakem as an exact character representation, George Eliot does show the weakness which makes the lawyer rise to the challenge provided by a wilful person like Mr. Tulliver. This weakness is related to the lawyer's prosperity and is given a universal application:

Prosperous men take a little vengeance now and then, as they take a diversion, when it comes easily in their way, and is no hindrance to business; and such small unimpassioned revenges have an enormous effect in life, running through all degrees of pleasant infliction, blocking the fit men out of places, and blackening characters in unpremeditated talk. Still more, to see people who have been only insignificantly offensive to us, reduced in life and humiliated without any special efforts of ours, is apt to have a soothing, flattering influence: Providence, or some other prince of this world, it appears, has undertaken the task of retribution for us; and really, by an agreeable constitution of things, our enemies somehow don't prosper. (III, vii, 396)

Mr. Wakem's methodical revenge comes under the guise of the financial yoke with which he means to bind Tulliver, and he makes very certain that this enemy will not prosper without having to depend on him.

Philip's father loves him and partially compensates him for the deformity of his body with financial security. Like Stephen Guest, Philip does not have to work, and he is free to follow the artist's career that he desires. Mr. Wakem does not like Philip to forget how good he is to the young man; as he enters his son's room,





which has the artist's desired sky-light, Wakem exclaims,

"This is a nice place for you, isn't it Phil?" --a capital light that from the roof, eh?" was, as usual, the first thing that he said on entering the painting-room. He liked to remind himself and his son too that his fatherly indulgence had provided the accommodation. He had been a good father. Emily would have nothing to reproach him with there, if she came back again from her grave. (VI, viii, 245)

As in all wrong attitudes to the things which money can do, Mr.

Wakem's thoughts contain a mixture of complacency and fear; complacency about the comforts he is able to provide, and fear that they are not really what is most needed. Later, when Philip tells his father about wishing to marry Maggie, in his anger the lawyer replies in terms of a business transaction about the relationship between him and his son:

"And this is the return you make me for all the indulgences I've heaped on you?" said Wakem.

"No, father," said Philip, looking up at him for the first time; "I don't regard it as a return. You have been an indulgent father to me; but I have always felt that it was because you had an affectionate wish to give me as much happiness as my unfortunate lot would admit of--not that it was a debt you expected me to pay by sacrificing all my chances of happiness to satisfy feelings of yours, which I can never share." (VI, viii, 247)

There is no idea in the young man's mind of viewing human relationships in a mercenary fashion. Philip seems to be the best of all the men in the novel because he does not believe in money as the sole bond between people. His deeds, not his financial position, are the things that make us admire him. In Philip Wakem there is confirmation of Laurence Lerner's statement that "when we turn to George Eliot's novels, no belief runs more firmly through them



than the belief that we are what our deeds make us, that handsome is as handsome does."<sup>3</sup>

Lerner has pointed out one idea that is implicit in a discussion of monetary values within the novels. George Eliot does not believe that the complete rejection of money is the highest good<sup>4</sup>; people who use their means well are equally commendable, in some cases more so, as those who reject it completely. Dorothea Brooke and Romola are only two of the several examples of this kind of virtue, and in their author's eyes they are on the same moral level or higher as Felix Holt and Esther Lyon.

One of the most important ideas in connection with money in the first two novels is that no matter what the location of the action, whether it is the pastoral setting of Loamshire or the commercial atmosphere of St. Ogg's, there are numerous problems concerning money and possessions. In Adam Bede and The Mill on the Floss money is not often used symbolically, but the frequent specific references to monetary attitudes indicate that money has profound effects on the development of the characters.





## CHAPTER III

### SILAS MARNER

Silas Marner, read as a fable or fairy tale by most readers, shows a basic concern with the values of life, especially in relation to money and possessions. The whole plot, in fact, revolves around money. As with so many of George Eliot's important characters, such as Gwendolen Harleth in Daniel Deronda and Tito Melema in Romola, we meet Silas Marner, Dunstan and Godfrey Cass, and even Eppie, in scenes involving money. Although we get a glimpse of Silas as the community of Raveloe first looks at him, we know little of the actual man until we have seen him as the victim of the evil of his "best friend." Silas is accused of stealing money from a senior deacon in his church, and it is as a result of this that he is driven from his home in Lantern Yard towards Raveloe and godlessness.

Raveloe is morally inadequate to the needs of Silas when he comes within its borders, because there is too much of the ease that comes with economic prosperity:

And what could be more unlike that Lantern Yard world than the world in Raveloe? --orchards looking lazy with neglected plenty; the large church in the wide churchyard, which men gazed at lounging at their own doors in service-time; the purple-faced farmers jogging along the lanes or turning in at the Rainbow; homesteads, where men supped heavily and slept in the light of the evening hearth, and where women seemed to be laying up a stock of linen for the life to come.

(II, 21-2)

The scene recalls the life in Loamshire and the "stock of linen" is an echo of the Dodsons' lives. For people in such a position, the spiritual life is neither a necessity nor a relief from cares, and they





are able to carry on their work without such support.

The life of the common people of Raveloe reflects that of the gentry, but the laziness of the lower classes is developing into a disease in the upper levels of this society:

It was still that glorious war-time which was felt to be a peculiar favour of Providence towards the landed interest, and the fall of prices had not yet come to carry the race of small squires and yeomen down that road to ruin for which extravagant habits and bad husbandry were plentifully anointing their wheels. (III, 32)

The squire's sons are products of these "extravagant habits and bad husbandry," and each of them is established as a degenerate character by his mercenary attitude. Dunstan and Godfrey Cass are of the same mould as Arthur Donnithorne and Fred Vincy who look upon money as their due. Each is first introduced as he quarrels over money, and although Dunstan is confirmed as the worse son of the two, Godfrey also is unable to handle finances properly. He is being blackmailed by his brother and in his anger has threatened to knock him down. In his reply, Dunstan sums up the financial problems of the two brothers:

"Oh no, you won't," said Dunsey, turning away on his heel however. ... "I might get you turned out of house and home, and cut off with a shilling any day. I might tell the Squire how his handsome son was married to that nice young woman, Molly Farren, and was very unhappy because he couldn't live with his drunken wife, and I should slip into your place as comfortable as could be. But you see, I don't do it--I'm so easy and good-natured. You'll take any trouble for me. You'll get the hundred pounds for me--I know you will." (III, 37)

The Squire's family is caught up in deceit and moral weakness, which have an economic center. Money is not used purposefully in the Cass family: Dunstan requires it for gambling, and Godfrey needs it to bribe his wife to silence. There is criminal intent in Dunsey's re-





marks, which prepare the way for his theft of Silas' gold.

In the other important Raveloe family, the Lammeters, there is a different attitude towards money. Godfrey is understood to be Nancy's suitor, and he is considered fortunate mainly because of her saving ways, a reflection of the home in which she lives:

If [Nancy] could come to be mistress at the Red House, there would be a fine change, for the Lammeters had been brought up in that way, that they never suffered a pinch of salt to be wasted, and yet everybody in their household had of the best, according to his place. Such a daughter-in-law would be a saving to the old Squire, if she never brought a penny to her fortune. (III, 35)

The Lammeters have the same pride in their neatness, cleanliness, thrift and good cooking that we have found previously in the Dodsons and to a lesser extent in Mrs. Poyser. Raveloe, then, from the gentry down, with its prosperous ways and its attitudes toward this prosperity, is another community whose moral orientation is tied in with its financial way of life.

Silas Marner enters this community as an individual who has lost his faith and he begins to find solace in the presence of the gold that his weaving gives him. The affection "which was not all gone" (II, 29) is channelled into a love of gold and of the one possession which has meaning for him, the brown earthenware pot in which he carries his water. When it is broken, he mends it and sets it on its usual spot, no more to be used, but to take its place as a kind of household god. In the description of Silas' "revelry" with his gold there is an image of his later attitude towards his daughter Eppie. We see his feelings about the gold as a parody of the relationship between people. He "loved the guineas best," and "thought





fondly of the guineas that were only half earned by the work in his loom, as if they had been unborn children" (II, 30-1).

In George Eliot's novels money or possessions cannot take the place of man's need for human communication and affection, and therefore Silas is given the opportunity to change a life in which gold has replaced every human contact. One person, Dunstan Cass, brings about a crisis in Silas' life, and it is important to note that two such divergent lives come together over a hoard of gold. The gold, which is tainted because it has become an end in itself, carries its curse to Dunstan, who loses his life; at the same time, its loss is Silas' salvation.

Silas' discovery of Eppie on his hearth is of the utmost significance to the story, both from a general point of view and when we look at it in relation to money. Eppie's hair, to Silas' near-sighted eyes, is his gold come back to him, but this image of the past is quickly dispelled, for "instead of the hard coin with the familiar resisting outline, his fingers encountered soft warm curls" (XII, 170). The image of the gold transformed to the softness of a child's golden hair is symbolic of the change which eventually occurs in Silas. Eppie not only takes the place of Silas' gold on the hearth but also becomes the recipient of the affectionate feeling which he had given to the lost hoard. George Eliot indicates man's need for social contact, and Silas' love for Eppie brings him back into the life of the community.

There is a gradual development in Silas away from his nar-





row world into a wider one. The way in which his mind works after years of hoarding is shown in the words that he uses in speaking of his sudden decision to keep the child: "No--no--I can't part with it, I can't let it go," said Silas abruptly. "It's come to me-- I've a right to keep it" (XIII, 176). To Silas the child is still equated with his gold; she is a possession to which he has a moral right, just as Maggie Tulliver is her mother's possession. Soon, however, the change in character that had begun with the loss of his money and the subsequent finding of Eppie makes Silas a new man. Eppie is the greatest reason for the transformation:

No child was afraid of approaching Silas when Eppie was near him: there was no repulsion around him now, either for young or old; for the little child had come to link him once more with the whole world. There was love between him and the child that blent them into one, and there was love between the child and the world--from men and women with parental looks and tones, to the red lady-birds and the round pebbles. (XIV, 200)

She is his link with the world which he has cut off from himself for fifteen years. Silas loses his desire to hoard gold, and now with Eppie to care for, his attitude towards the earnings of his trade becomes the necessary one for the establishment of a new life: And now something had come to replace his hoard which gave a growing purpose to the earnings, drawing his hope and joy continually onward beyond the money. (XIV, 201)

The last phrase indicates the great change in Silas and draws attention to the meaning which money must have, as the means to a good life, not an end in itself.

While Silas discovers a new life through his reformed attitude, Godfrey Cass leads an existence in which money becomes a means





of atonement for the lie that he is living. Because he is living in falsehood, like Bulstrode in Middlemarch, Godfrey's money cannot bring him any happiness. It will not buy a child for him and his barren wife; it cannot be used extensively in giving aid to Silas and the child of Godfrey's dead wife, because he fears that his secret will be discovered. He sees duty purely in terms of money, and his attitude and the way in which he salves his conscience are expressed in the following passage:

He dared not do anything that would imply a stronger interest in a poor man's adopted child than could be expected from the kindness of the young Squire, when a chance meeting suggested a little present to a simple old fellow whom others noticed with goodwill; but he told himself that the time would come when he might do something towards furthering the welfare of his daughter without incurring suspicion. (XV, 202)

His rationalizations to himself just barely allow Godfrey to live with his past.

When he does decide to acknowledge his fatherhood, he and his wife see Eppie as a discarded possession which they can reclaim after fifteen years. In presenting his proposition to Silas, Godfrey says,

"But I've a claim on you, Eppie--the strongest of all claims. It's my duty, Marner, to own Eppie as my child, and provide for her. She's my own child: her mother was my wife. I've a natural claim on her that must stand before every other." (XIX, 254)

Nancy speaks of Eppie in similar terms: "My dear, you'll be a treasure to me," said Nancy, in her gentle voice. "We shall want for nothing when we have our daughter" (XIX, 258). Silas, whose new view of life is very different from the Casses', does not think of





Eppie strictly in the limitations of ownership any longer; he feels only the love and affection between Eppie and him, and he refuses to give her up:

Sir, why didn't you...claim her before I'd come to love her, i'stead o' coming to take her from me now, when you might as well take the heart out o' my body? God gave her to me because you turned your back on her, and He looks upon her as mine: you've no right to her! When a man turns a blessing from his door, it falls to them as take it in." (XIX, 254)

This is what Silas has been dreading, for Eppie's loss would be unendurable, and his use of "you've no right to her" reflects the same kind of desperation that he felt upon losing his gold.

Because Eppie loves Silas, Godfrey's offers of money, possessions and beautiful clothes do not attract her. Her kindheartedness and capacity for affection are a contrast with Hetty Sorrel's character in Adam Bede, for in the same situation Hetty would have no qualms about leaving her family. Eppie properly and characteristically rejects the bribery of the Casses, providing the following reasons for her decision:

"I can't feel as I've got any father but one," said Eppie...."I've always thought of a little home where he'd sit i' the corner, and I should fend and do everything for him: I can't think o' no other home. I wasn't brought up to be a lady, and I can't turn my mind to it. I like the working-folks, and their victuals, and their ways. And," she ended passionately, ..."I'm promised to marry a working-man, as'll live with father, and help me to take care of him."  
(IX, 259)

Unlike Hetty, Eppie is content with the everyday situation of her life. Her speech is a summary of all the things demanded of those within the world of George Eliot's novels: the love of duty, the bonds of affection, and an acceptance of the financial situation in





which one finds comfort and satisfaction. It is only when Godfrey enters into this feeling and understands it that he finds redemption and peace of mind. In his acceptance of the irrevocability of the situation, he speaks again in monetary terms:

"There's debts we can't pay like money debts, by paying extra for the years that have slipped by....Marner was in the right in what he said about a man's turning away a blessing from his door: it falls to somebody else." (XX, 262)

Godfrey must see that it is more important for him to establish good relations with his wife and with the community than to live in a past which cannot be recalled. The fact that he cannot pay his debt to Silas is an unhappiness that he must learn to endure.

Godfrey Cass's claim to Eppie is precipitated by the discovery of Dunstan Cass's body with Silas' gold beside it in the Stonepits. The fifteen years which have elapsed since the loss of the money and Silas' gaining Eppie have been a preparation for this moment. Silas now can pile the gold on the table without feeling that it is his only joy. In those fifteen years he has learned the real value of money, and he sees his hoard now simply as a way to help Eppie and Aaron in their married life. The initial loss of the gold has been a blessing: "The money was taken away from me in time; and you see it's been kept--kept till it was wanted for you" (XIX, 248).

Money is important in Silas Marner in a way that is different from its role in any of the other novels. Silas' gold is the central symbol around which the plot develops, and it is the measure





of Silas' growth. Its effect, moreover, is felt even more strongly after it has been stolen. Throughout the story gold is seen as a corrupting disease which can cut man off from the healing contact with his community.

Within the progress of the narrative the symbolism of money fluctuates, particularly for Silas. The accusation of theft makes him conscious of the importance which people attach to money. When he comes to Raveloe he replaces his lost god with gold. Having gained Eppie, he fears the possible return of the money because he feels that its recovery may bring about Eppie's loss, a fear which is almost realized when the Casses claim her. Finally, it symbolizes the past which he cannot recover as he, in part, tries to do in his return to Lantern Yard. Now he realizes that he need fear gold no longer, for it has taken its proper place as a means of supplementing his happiness.

Although Silas Marner is not a full-length novel and involves only a very small group of characters, it can be seen as a microcosmic view of some universal money attitudes. Silas' obsession with money is more subtle in its application to characters in later novels, but its basic corrupting possibilities are always present. Love and the duty to one's fellow men are as important in Middlemarch and Treby Magna as they are in Raveloe. Silas Marner, then, is a fable or an allegory in its application, and as such provides an important key to the study of money in the larger novels.



## CHAPTER IV

### ROMOLA

Romola presents a special problem in a discussion of money themes in Eliot's novels, for money to the fifteenth-century Florentine is seen in different terms, if not different in its ends, from those of the nineteenth-century Englishman. George Eliot, I believe, has taken pains with this aspect of Romola just as she has with every other attempt to show all the facets of Florentine life. In dealing with money she has succeeded fairly well but has slightly forced certain kinds of money values on one character, Tito Melema, in particular. Aspects of money in Romola are evident in terms of jewellery, clothing, personal adornments and gambling more than as coinage or gold. This novel provides one of George Eliot's most extensive uses of jewellery imagery, almost all of which pertains to Tito Melema. Because the gambling imagery, too, is related to Tito, I shall discuss Romola mainly through his part in the plot of the novel.

Although Tito is a Greek born in Italy, he is linked with the typical Florentine in the Proem, which provides the setting of Romola. Like the old Florentine, Tito learns "to distrust men without bitterness; looking on life mainly as a game of skill," but he differs in that unlike the Florentine, he is "dead to traditions of heroism and clean-handed honour" (Proem, 7). From the very first, Tito Melema is indifferent to honour, and it is perhaps this atti-





tude that condemns his way of life in comparison with that of the typical Florentine.

The ring that Tito wears is a reminder of the Greek's past and becomes one means of his nemesis later in the novel. In the meantime, attention is focussed on the difference between the ragged clothes that Tito wears and the jewellery he possesses. Gambling, too, in the guise of the good fortune of his meeting with Bratti, affects our picture of Tito from the first. He is accompanied by good and bad fortune throughout the novel, just as he is haunted by gems.

When we have come to know Tito better and to understand some of his character, we see his weaknesses, but we are given clues early in the novel about this man who has little or no background. The barber who shaves Tito's beard provides us with an indication of his personal beauty, as well as giving us an inadvertent hint of the Greek's character. In his faded clothes, Tito apparently has "the air of a fallen prince" (III, 55). Later, in connection with character, the word "fallen" becomes particularly relevant.

In an effort to rise from his "fallen" condition, in an economic sense, Tito sells some jewels which he possesses. The start which Tito gives when Bardo declares the gems are worth "a man's ransom" is explained to us when we learn that this is, in fact, the purpose for which the gems were to be used. Tito has talked himself into believing that the man to be ransomed, his foster-father Baldassarre, is already dead. In this gamble



with fortune Tito indicates the way that his character is growing. His belief in fortune is usually tied up with whatever is most expedient for him. The money he receives from the jewels is, like Silas Marner's gold, tainted, and it eventually contributes to his downfall.

In our first glimpse of Tito Melema's inner thoughts, we see his belief in fortune, which is similar to that of Gwendolen Harleth in Daniel Deronda. He has entered into a new life and feels confident of the future. Both his personal attraction and some of the corruption beneath are mentioned in the following summary of his achievements so far:

Tito was...sailing under the fairest breeze, and besides convincing fair judges that his talents squared with his good fortune, he wore that fortune so easily and unpretentiously that no one had yet been offended by it.

And that was not the whole of Tito's good fortune; for he had sold all his jewels, except the ring he did not choose to part with, and he was master of full five hundred gold florins.

(IV, 146-7)

The personal attractions that are an asset to him are always reinforced by the money which he uses to gain power.

Tito's good fortune continues in his courtship of and marriage with Romola, the beautiful daughter of the scholar, Bardo. Certain occurrences arise to mar his luck, but he seemingly overcomes these problems. Tito is well on his way to corruption, however, and the development of this decadence is described in terms of selling and bondage: "He had sold himself to evil, but at present life seemed so nearly the same to him that he was not con-





scious of the bond" (XII, 179). The position in which Tito has unconsciously placed himself leads him, through his belief in good fortune, to a disastrous end, although he continues to believe that he will be able to overcome any odds not in his favour.

Tito's life takes on the aspect of a gamble more and more when he seeks his fortune in the game of politics, the one occupation which suits itself to all of his talents.

As the freshness of young passion faded, life was taking more and more decidedly for him the aspect of a game in which there was an agreeable mingling of skill and chance.

And the game that might be played in Florence promised to be rapid and exciting; it was a game...of that unavowed action in which brilliant ingenuity...is apt to see the path of superior wisdom. (XXXV, 35)

Tito thrives on the danger of his role as well as on the power that he gains. But his life, like Godfrey Cass's and Bulstrode's, is also based on lies, and the net of deceit closes around him because "he had borrowed from that terrible usurer Falsehood, and the loan had mounted and mounted with the years, till he belonged to the usurer, body and soul" (XXXIX, 96). Tito discovers that Baldassarre is living, that he has escaped from bondage in Florence, and that he is watching for an opportunity to kill his false son. Baldassarre returns again and again to accuse Tito of his sins.

Fortune remains operative in Tito's life until the end, and he accepts most of the crises which he faces as part of the chances which he continually takes. When he fears that Romola will discover that he is involved in the plot against Savonarola, he thinks of life as "so complicated a game that the devices of skill





were liable to be defeated at every turn by air-blown chances, incalculable as the descent of thistle-down" (XLVII, 178). The political game is extremely complex, but Tito is confident of his ability to handle any of the dangers which confront him. When Bernardo del Nero and other Medicean sympathizers are arrested, Tito remains safe. Because of his lack of honour, it "was easy to him to keep up this triple game," but the price of dishonour which Tito pays for his safety "would have been thought heavy by most men; and Tito himself would rather not have paid it" (LVII, 277, 279), not because he feels remorse, but because he fears detection. If he had not acted, "his own fortune, which made a promising fabric, would have been utterly ruined" (LVII, 284), and "no man, unless by very rare good fortune, could mount high in the world without incurring a few unpleasant necessities which laid him open to enmity" (LVII, 285).

Tito decides to leave Florence, where he is beginning to feel uneasy in his role, but before doing so he joins in the final plot against Savonarola. Even in this precarious position, Tito counts on fortune and prides himself in his ability:

He was now playing his final game in Florence, and the skill he was conscious of applying gave him a pleasure in it even apart from the expected winnings....If he proved to be right, his game would be won, and he might soon turn his back on Florence. (LXIII, 352)

To the end, Tito gambles, and it seems that by diving into the river he has been able to save himself from the mob which was about to attack him:

It was his chance of salvation; and it was a good chance. His life had been saved once before by his fine swimming, and as he rose to





the surface again after his long dive he had a sense of deliverance.  
(LXVII, 391)

The only deliverance for Tito is into the arms of Baldassarre, and Tito's good fortune deserts him; in fact, the meeting between the two men is ironically referred to as a "fortunate chance" for Baldassarre, who finally murders Tito. Like other gamblers in the novels, Tito inevitably loses. The whole image of fortune or gambling shows the weakness in Tito's character and the ruthlessness that allows him to gain continually from the losses of others.

Tito's link with jewels has been discussed earlier, but the central image of gems in connection with him has been left until we have a picture of his character as reflected in the imagery of fortune. Tito is like the gems in a very real way: he is beautiful, yet hard, with the polished, glittering hardness of the stones. It is through jewellery that he is linked with the two women in his life; to Tessa he gives a necklace and bracelet of precious gems, and it is to Tessa alone that he gives fully of himself. With her he can remove his chain mail and his callousness to become relaxed. To Romola he presents only the outward appearance, symbolized in the idealized portrait which he has painted as a betrothal gift to her. In his brief scenes with his wife, Tito retains his protective armour, and his soul itself gradually hardens towards her. When he finally throws off his belt and the jewels, and with the absence of his chain mail, Tito discards all pretence; but it is a futile gesture which is too late, and he must die.





Romola herself is linked with gold and jewellery imagery.

Her golden hair is a symbol of purity rather than of corruption, and it is partially because of her hair that Tessa and the people in the plague-ridden village look upon her as a vision of the Virgin Mary or a guardian angel. The boy in the village who first sees her describes her as "the Holy Mother with the Babe, fetching water for the sick: she was as tall as the cypresses, and had a light about her head, and she looked up at the church" (LXVIII, 406). This is the kind of image that we are meant to have of Romola; she shows the spiritual kindness of the selfless, non-materialistic person in contrast with Tito's worldly, power-hungry greed.

Two images of Romola early in the novel link her with Tito and provide warnings about him for the characters and for the reader. After Bernardo del Nero's first meeting with Melema, he is aware of the attraction between Romola and the Greek, and he warns her father:

"Remember, Bardo, thou hast a rare gem of thy own; take care no one gets it who is not likely to pay a worthy price. That pretty Greek has a lithe sleekness about him, that seems marvellously fitted for slipping easily into any nest he fixes his mind on." (VI, 113)

Bernardo is the first one to see that Tito's outward appearance is deceptive and that he would be a poor husband for Romola. In another passage Tito himself echoes del Nero's warning. When replying to a statement of Romola's about del Nero, he says, "I have no rancour against Messer Bernardo for thinking you too precious for me, my Romola" (XVII, 276). Neither he nor Romola realizes that his statement is true. The difference between Romola as a precious jewel





and Tito as a hard, glittering one becomes evident very soon. Her moral sense is too precious to become soiled by Tito's evil.

Romola's character, like Tito's, is sometimes delineated by the kind of clothing that she wears, such as in the scene in which she dons the nun's habit in her first attempt to leave her husband. Her removal of all clothing and the betrothal ring which connect her with Tito's life is symbolic of her wish to disassociate herself from him. When Savonarola confronts her and forces her to turn back, we realize that she has also attempted to shed the responsibilities and hard duties which a loveless life with Tito would involve. Because of her nature and the influence of Savonarola, Romola must return to her home and accept her lot. She does not wear the clothes of a wealthy Florentine woman any longer, however; from that time she accepts the new responsibilities of a selfless follower of the priest and she dresses in the simple clothing of a Piagnone, while she retains her betrothal ring as a sign of obedience to wifely duty.

Romola's changes in dress indicate some of the growth in her character, just as similar actions of Dorothea Brooke point out character change, but for Tessa, the contadina's simple costume that she wears throughout the novel is a sign of her continuing childishness and innocence. She also continues to wear Tito's necklace and the amulet, relics of her marriage, and the final picture we are given of her is very little different from the first:

Tessa's fingers had not become more adroit with the years--only very





much fatter....She still wore her contadina gown; it was only broader than the old one; and there was the silver pin in her rough curly brown hair, and round her neck the memorable necklace, with a red cord under it, that ended mysteriously in her bosom. Her rounded face wore even a more perfect look of childish content than in her younger days. (Epilogue, 442)

The only other woman of any importance in the plot of Romola is Bardo's cousin, Monna Brigida, and in contrast to Romola her characterization is built around her worldly love for finery. Personal adornment is her greatest love and her most vulnerable spot, and the scene in which the young acolytes attempt to take away all her finery, including her false hair, is the least forced of the humorous scenes in the novel. Like Tessa, Monna Brigida prefers vanity to the "gems of His grace" (L, 214). Her resolve to become a Piagnone without jewels, false hair, or rouge passes quickly, but we do see her in her old age, sleeping at peace without false braids or false colour in her cheeks (Epilogue, 442).

In Romola money is an implied presence at all times for the class which lived well on the spoils of intrigue and war. Romola and her father are exceptions, because her father has given up wealth for the sake of scholarship. The time of the plague is bad for everyone, particularly the peasants, but we see their condition only briefly and our concern does not rest with them. Throughout the period which George Eliot describes, money is discussed in terms of power, so that greed becomes a hunger for domination rather than for riches.

Savonarola is free of desire for money, but he is involved with the fight for power. If his motives are less selfish, his end





is similar to Tito's--a wish for power, which like the power of Bulstrode in Middlemarch, will be used for the furtherance of God's kingdom. The flaw in his motives becomes clear in his last interview with Romola and causes her to reject what he and his movement have become. She accuses him of perverting his influence over his followers:

"Take care, father, lest your enemies have some reason when they say, that in your visions of what will further God's kingdom you see only what will strengthen your own party."

"And that is true!" said Savonarola, with flashing eyes. Romola's voice had seemed to him in that moment the voice of his enemies. "The cause of my party is the cause of God's kingdom."

"I do not believe it!" said Romola, her whole frame shaken with passionate repugnance. "God's kingdom is something wider--else, let me stand outside it with the beings I love."

(LIX, 309)

Romola does stand outside the human kingdoms which Savonarola and Tito represent. Her concern is not with the fight for money and its resultant power but with the selflessness of duty towards "the beings I love" who are in need of the fellowship of the human community.





## CHAPTER V

### FELIX HOLT

A monetary view of Felix Holt presents a return to the importance of money, property and possessions in early nineteenth-century England. In George Eliot's fifth novel, money becomes as much of a concern for the Transomes, Holts, and Lyonses as it was for the Dodsons and Tullivers in The Mill on the Floss. For them also it is a source of respectability, as it is in Middlemarch, and the means by which money or property is acquired serves as the basis for a judgment on those concerned.

Property in this novel should be considered initially, for it has profound effects on the majority of the important characters. George Eliot indicates the importance of property and inheritance early in the novel; in the first chapter she uses an image that foreshadows the crises which are to take place. Commenting on the story of the Transomes which Sampson the coachman tells to his passengers, she says,

And such stories often come to be fine in a sense that is not ironical. For there is seldom any wrong-doing which does not carry along with it some down-fall of blindly-climbing hopes, some hard entail of suffering, some quickly-satiated desire that survives, with the life in death of the old paralytic vice, to see itself cursed by its woeful progeny--some tragic mark of kinship in the one brief life to the far-stretching life that went before, and to the life that is to come after, such as has raised the pity and terror of men ever since they began to discern between will and destiny. (Introduction, 13)

This parable of the Transome's story suggests the complexity of the inheritance of the past for this family.



In her appearance, speech and demeanour, Mrs. Transome is clearly marked out as one who should have wealth and power, although it is also evident that she has not been able to enjoy the money which she possesses. Already the seeds of her own wrong-doing are poisoning her life. In Mr. Transome we see the retribution of the Durfey-Transomes, and his senile state, along with the curse of an elder imbecile son, now dead, shows us that their inheritance has been tainted, and that the family is in decline.

Harold Transome's character has been partially moulded by the circumstances affected by property, for at the age of nineteen, as the second son who has no hope of gaining an inheritance, he has been obliged to seek his fortune in Europe. During his fifteen years absence, he has become alienated from his home, his family, and in particular, from his mother. His attitude towards the proud woman who has tried to save his inheritance is one of superiority and he disregards the fact that she has a mind well-equipped to handle business matters. His answer to her assertion that she has efficiently carried on the affairs of property elicits a reply that irritates Mrs. Transome:

"Bravo, mother!" said Harold, putting his hand on her shoulder. "Ah, you've had to worry yourself about things that don't properly belong to a woman....We'll set all that right. You shall have nothing to do now but to be grandmamma on satin cushions." (I, 28)

Harold's remark indicates his lack of feeling for his mother, and he attempts to subject her to his masculine superiority in financial matters. His money and his rights to the land give him power over





her, and she can only exclaim hopelessly when he tells her,

"You must really leave me to take my own course in these matters, which properly belong to men....Let us understand that there shall be no further collision between us on subjects on which I must be master of my own actions." (II, 56)

In taking this stand, Harold almost completely ruins his relationship with his mother and unwittingly punishes her.

Not only does Harold intend to take the financial reins from his mother's hands, but he also promises to relieve the estate of the management of the lawyer, Jermyn, who has been made wealthy through his connection with the Transomes. Harold sees him in terms of the money which he has taken from the estate, but he is clever enough to realize that Jermyn can be used for certain purposes before he is discarded. In speaking of the hold which the lawyer has over his finances, Harold says to his mother, "Oh, Jermyn be hanged! ...I shall pay him off--mortgages and all by-and-by. I'll owe him nothing--not even a curse" (VIII, 160). When we become aware that Jermyn is Harold's father, their relationship grows ironic in the fullest sense, for as F. C. Thomson says in his article on Felix Holt, "Harold himself inherits not only the sleek paunchy physical characteristics and selfish unsympathetic nature of his father, but the dire consequences of his mother's sin."<sup>1</sup>

Inheritance is a dominant theme throughout the story in reference to the characters directly involved with the Transomes.

Jermyn inherits the fruit of his deeds in early life; Mrs. Transome sees the result of her indulgence in vanity and passion; Harold





suffers the consequences of the actions of all his family; and Esther Lyon first receives and then rejects the diseased legacy which belongs to her.

The workings of the moral inheritance centered on an economic structure are as complicated as the involvements of the plot built on the idea of "base fee." In his article, Thomson explains the workings of the legal aspects of the novel as clearly as possible, but the moral aspects are not as easy to explain in a methodical way. Felix Holt's story is also, in part, one of inheritance, and his association with this motif becomes clear soon after the story begins. He is linked with Harold in both a negative and a positive way:

Nature and fortune seemed to have done what they could to keep the lots of the two men quite aloof from each other. Felix was heir to nothing better than a quack medicine; his mother lived up a small back street in Treby Magna....There could hardly have been a lot less like Harold Transome's than this of the quack doctor's son, except in the superficial facts that he called himself a Radical, that he was the only son of his mother, and that he had lately returned to his home with ideas and resolves not a little disturbing to that mother's mind. (III, 73-4)

Whereas Harold comes home with a fortune to claim his inheritance, Felix returns to reject both the moral and the material legacy which he has received from his father. Felix will have nothing to do with corrupt money, for like Will Ladislav in Middlemarch, he much prefers his honour to material things. When the minister, Mr. Lyon, questions him about his actions and expresses concern about Felix's ability to support his mother, the young man replies,

"If I allowed the sale of those medicines to go on, and my mother to live out of the proceeds when I can keep her by the honest labour of my hands, I've not the least doubt that I should be a rascal."

(V, 89)



Although the things which Felix rejects are less important in degree than the things which Harold accepts, the principle is significant; money gained or used in the wrong way carries with it a curse on the man who accepts it without question. Felix's scruples seem overly sensitive, but we can see that his stand is necessary to point out the flaws in Harold's character. The link through money reinforces our view of the two men as we see them in their political stances.

Throughout the novel Felix's stand against money that is not earned is made evident in his discussion with Esther, with Mr. Lyon and with almost everyone else. In his very first conversation with the minister, he bluntly gives his opinion of men who try to rise above their class:

"I'll take no employment that obliges me to prop up my chin with a high cravat, and wear straps, and pass the livelong day with a set of fellows who spend their spare money on shirt-pins. That sort of work is really lower than many handicrafts; it only happens to be paid out of proportion." (V, 93)

And again, he exclaims,

"Oh yes, your ringed and scented men of the people! --I won't be one of them. Let a man once throttle himself with a satin stock, and he'll get new wants and new motives....I might end by collecting greasy pence from poor men to buy myself a fine coat and a glutton's dinner, on pretence of serving the poor men." (V, 94-5)

Felix is speaking against men like Harold Transome who pretend to represent the people but who really use them for their own ends, and he refuses to have anything to do with Harold. In his attitude in this case Felix is like Caleb Garth who refuses to work for Bulstrode when he learns that the banker is corrupt. Both Caleb and Felix have an uprightness of character that outweighs any financial





considerations.

In telling Esther of his attitude towards life, Felix speaks in terms of money and gambling, and he displays his hatred of dishonest dealings:

"I'm determined never to go about making my face simpering or solemn, and telling professional lies for profit; or to get tangled in affairs where I must wink at dishonesty and pocket the proceeds, and justify that knavery as part of a system that I can't alter....I should become everything that I see now beforehand to be detestable. And what's more, I should do this, as men are doing it every day, for a ridiculously small prize--perhaps for none at all--perhaps for the sake of two parlours, a rank eligible for the churchwardenship, a discontented wife, and several unhopeful children." (XXVII, 37)

Felix rejects the usual goal of gaining respectability through money. This is the kind of world which Jermyn and the Transomes inhabit, however, and when the monetary foundation collapses, respectability ends.

Even when he is in prison, Felix's concern is with the future and with the course of his life in relation to his chosen state of penury. Through Esther's father he sends her the following message:

" 'Tell her,' he said, 'whatever they sentence me to, she knows they can't rob me of my vocation. With poverty for my bride, and preaching and pedagogy for my business, I am sure of a handsome establishment'."

Part of the strength of Felix's character lies in his ability to reject that which is corrupt in money and morals, and his choice of poverty over monied respectability is one reflection of that strength.

In the beginning, Esther Lyon's character is neither as strong nor as upright as Felix's. Her whole orientation is toward those





things which are the products of financial security. Even before she appears, we learn that her own money is spent on wax candles, because she is "so delicately framed that the smell of tallow is loathsome to her" (V, 87). When she pours tea for Felix and Mr. Lyon, the young man sees in her the thing which he detests--a fine lady, for a "fine lady was always a sort of spun-glass affair--not natural and with no beauty for him as art; but a fine lady as the daughter of this rusty old Puritan was especially offensive" (V, 99). Esther seems to belong in an atmosphere different from that of Treby Magna, and as we find out later, she has a monied ancestry, which may account for her delicacy and aristocratic tastes; she does not deny that she is superior, and even before she learns of her ancestors she is proud of her own delicacy:

She was well satisfied with herself for her fastidious taste, never doubting that hers was the highest standard. She was proud that the best-born and handsomest girls at school had always said that she might be taken for a born lady. Her own pretty instep, clad in a silk stocking, her little heel just rising from a kid slipper...were the objects of delighted consciousness to her....Her money all went in the gratification of these nice tastes, and she saved nothing from her earnings. (VI, 113-4)

Throughout the novel Esther's attitude towards surface finery affects her relations with the people around her; she loves her father and respects him, but

his old clothes had a smoky odour, and she did not like to walk with him, because, when people spoke to him in the street, it was his wont, instead of remarking on the weather and passing on, to pour forth in an absent manner some reflections that were occupying his mind.  
(VI, 115)

At first Esther judges Felix by his "dreadful accent" in the pronun-





ciation of French and his "assumption of superiority" (X, 184, 188); however, it is because of her relationship with Felix that Esther begins to change her attitude towards money and fine possessions. His criticism of her creates a new kind of sensibility and she realizes that people are more important than her fear of being tainted by their commonness. After Felix's first Sunday visit in which he sees Esther alone and devastatingly chastises her, she begins to wonder what life would be like in terms so different from her own:

Since Sunday she had felt...obliged, in spite of herself, to think of Felix Holt--to imagine what he would like her to be, and what sort of views he took of life so as to make it seem valuable in the absence of elegance, luxury, gaiety, or romance. (XV, 256)

To accept this kind of world Esther must give up all luxuries, but as she considers Felix's view, her own vision widens, and she is prepared for the crisis which soon follows.

The crisis occurs when Esther discovers through a complicated legal process that she is the heiress to the Transome estate. Her first reaction is one of awe at the thought of her position; the second is an envisioning of what Felix Holt, now in prison, would say about her fortune. The words she imagines include a warning:

"That is clearly your destiny--to be aristocratic, to be rich. I always saw that our lots lay widely apart. You are not fit for poverty, or any work of difficulty. But remember what I once said to you about a vision of consequences; take care where your fortune leads you." (XXXVIII, 185)

Esther sees a terrible "vision of consequences" in the face and life of Mrs. Transome, and she finally refuses the fortune that is offered.

Felix's attitude to money has a clear influence on Esther's





change in character, and through it, on the course of the plot; for when the choice comes between a life of poverty with her father, and a life with Harold Transome as her husband, it is the thought of Felix's beliefs that helps her to choose. He has made her see life in other than monetary terms:

"I think I didn't see the meaning of anything fine--I didn't even see the value of my father's character, until I had been taught a little by hearing what Felix Holt said, and seeing that his life was like his words." (XLIII, 268)

The complete change in Esther because of her relationship with Felix is seen in their last scene together, just after Felix has proposed marriage. Assuring Felix of her physical and mental fitness for entering into marriage with a poor man, she says,

"I am very healthy. Poor women, I think, are healthier than the rich. Besides," Esther went on, with a mischievous meaning, "I think of having some wealth."

"How?" said Felix, with an anxious start. "What do you mean?"

"I think even of two pounds a-week: one needn't live up to the splendour of all that, you know; we might live as simply as you liked: there would be money to spare, and you could do wonders, and be obliged to work too, only not if sickness came. And then I think of a little income for your mother...and a little income for my father." (LI, 355)

With the shift in Esther's attitude towards money comes a change in her concern for others; her material comfort is no longer important, for she has achieved a wider vision.

The gains in Esther's life coincide with the losses in the lives of Jermyn and the Transomes, who are unable to overcome the evil in their financial existences because of the taints upon their moral view. Jermyn and Harold's mother have gambled that their own





corruption will not be discovered; but they both lose. Mrs. Transome's added sin is that she has hoped for the death of one child to fulfil the destiny of another, and her feelings are described early in terms of gambling:

Such desires make life a hideous lottery, where every day may turn up a blank; where men and women who have the softest beds and the most delicate eating...grow haggard, fevered, and restless, like those who watch in other lotteries. Day after day, year after year, had yielded blanks; new cares had come, bringing other desires for results quite beyond her grasp, which must also be watched for in the lottery. (I, 31-2)

Before Harold's return, Mrs. Transome believes that she has won her lottery, but her son fails to fulfil her hopes and she loses all that she has gambled. Denner's reference to life in the following terms is much more closely related to Mrs. Transome's own life than she realizes: "There's good chances and there's bad chances, and nobody's luck is pulled only by one string" (I, 38). In depending on "one string," Mrs. Transome gambles, and she is bound to fail.

Jermyn's position has been even more precarious, for his respectability rests solely on money and not on any hereditary property or aristocratic birth. Harold's uncle, Mr. Lingon, asks Harold about Jermyn, and Harold refers to him as "a sort of amateur gentleman" (II, 61). Mr. Lingon describes him from the point of view of the hereditary monied class and gives us an idea of Jermyn's ambitions:

"A fat-handed, glib-tongued fellow, with a scented cambric handkerchief; one of your educated low-bred fellows; a foundling who got his Latin for nothing at Christ's Hospital; one of your middle-class upstarts who want to rank with gentlemen, and they think they'll do it with kid gloves and new furniture." (II, 46)





In worrying about Harold's disturbing influence on the estate, Jermyn's thoughts dwell on the threat to his respectability and its financial basis:

His heaviest reflections...turned on the possibility of incidents... which would have disagreeable results, requiring him to raise money, and perhaps causing scandal, which in its way might also help to create a monetary deficit. A man of sixty, with a wife whose...connections were of the highest respectability, with a family of tall daughters, an expensive establishment, and a large professional business, owed a great deal more to himself as a mainstay of all those solidities, than to feelings and ideas which were quite unsubstantial. (IX, 176)

The precarious position in which he finds himself is the result of an "inconvenience": "He had sinned for the sake of particular concrete things, and particular consequences were likely to follow" (IX, 177).

In his last desperation, after Harold has discarded him in public, Jermyn determines to have an interview with Harold and to force him to come to terms. This foremost thought in his mind overshadows any idea of less drastic, less effective measures: "That's all very fine, but I'm not going to be ruined if I can help it-- least of all, ruined in that way" (XLVII, 325). Jermyn is ruined, and with him, all of Mrs. Transome's hopes of keeping the secret of her relationship with him from Harold.

Harold Transome's brilliant hopes for the future of Transome Court are not darkened completely, but they are dimmed by his discovery of the fact that Jermyn is his father. In the scheme of inheritance, he has been cursed with the same hardness as his father and he learns too late through Esther's respect for Felix what other





possibilities might have opened for him.

The determining factors of money, inheritance and property rule the process of plot development and evolvement of character to a very great extent in Felix Holt. Felix himself is the representative of duty to one's fellow man and to the community over the egoistic concern with money and its selfish application. Esther is the one character who grows within the novel, and her growth centers on the effects of the presence of Felix, the inheritance of property, and the rejection of the values represented by the Transomes. Jermy's whole life and the establishment of his respectability, along with its downfall, is based almost wholly on his attitude towards money, and he more than Harold Transome is the antithesis of Felix Holt.

The setting of Felix Holt is one in which change is taking place, but this very change emphasizes the unchanging influence which money and the wish for those things which it represents has for men. Felix Holt's fight against corruption makes him a free man in relation to the other people in the society, but first he must undergo an alienation from that society which is too corrupt to understand the meaning of his kind of freedom and which condemns him for it. Hope is given by people like Felix, Mr. Lyon and Esther, but even with that hope George Eliot provides an ironic comment on the way that society as a whole continues to move:

As to that wide parish of Treby Magna, it has since prospered as the rest of England has prospered. Doubtless there is more enlightenment now. Whether the farmers are all public-spirited, the shop-





keepers nobly independent, the Sproxton men entirely sober and judicious, the Dissenters quite without narrowness or asperity in religion and politics, and the publicans all fit...to be the friends of an apostle--these things I have not heard....Whether any presumption may be drawn from the fact that North Loamshire does not yet return a Radical candidate, I leave to the all-wise.  
(Epilogue, 359)



## CHAPTER VI

### MIDDLEMARCH

Middlemarch is a portrayal of provincial middle-class life in Victorian England. Sir James Chettam, the highest in position of the people in this society, is only a baronet, and the Brooke connections "though not exactly aristocratic, were unquestionably 'good:' if you inquired backward for a generation or two, you would not find any yard-measuring or parcel-tying forefathers-- anything lower than an admiral or a clergyman" (I, 8). The banker Bulstrode, the mayor Vincy, who is also a manufacturer, the landowning Featherstones and Waules, the clergyman Farebrother, the surgeon Lydgate, and the Garths make up the rest of this middle-class community.

Money provides the important foundation of Middlemarch society. Bulstrode's money is the basis of his power and its use is justified in his own mind by religious motives. His attitude is the result of a complex set of circumstances which had given him financial power in his early life, and his course had, he thought, been sanctioned by remarkable providences, appearing to point the way for him to be the agent in making the best use of a large property and withdrawing it from perversion. ...Bulstrode would have adopted Cromwell's words--"Do you call these bare events? The Lord pity you!" ...It was easy for him to settle what was due from him to others by inquiring what were God's intentions with regard to himself. (LXI, 130-1)

Dorothea Brooke is a St. Theresa of the Victorian era whose passionate belief in doing good is aided by superfluous money but





inhibited by the tenets of political economy, which makes "spending money so as not to injure one's neighbours" (LXXXIII, 417) a difficult procedure. Mr. Brooke is a theoretical reformer whose ideas are progressive, but whose actions are limited by tight-fistedness and by his consciousness that there is no simple way of bringing about reform. In contrast to Mr. Brooke is Sir James Chettam, who spends money on remodelling cottages, but is unable to overcome his conservatism and to think in terms of real reform rather than mere patronage.

For people like Caleb Garth, money is inseparable from the work that earns it, and he is in direct contrast to those like Fred Vincy and Tertius Lydgate who are financially irresponsible, accepting the money which comes to them as their due. These attitudes to money recall those of Adam Bede and Arthur Donnithorne respectively.

Fred Vincy's belief that money need not be earned stems from his father's indulgence of the young man and Fred's subsequent dependence on his father's good will:

Fred had always his father's pocket as a last resource, so that his assets of hopefulness had a sort of gorgeous superfluity about them. Of what might be the capacity of his father's pocket, Fred had only a vague notion; was not trade elastic? and would not the deficiencies of one year be made up for by the surplus of another? (XXIII, 350-1)

His gambling is just another indication of his ill-founded hopefulness.

Lydgate believes in earning his money, but his attitude





is wrong in its failure to rise above the "vulgarity of feeling that there would be an incompatibility in his furniture not being of the best" (XV, 227-8). It had "never occurred to him that he should live in any other than what he would have called an ordinary way, with green glasses for hock, and excellent waiting at table" (XXXVI, 114). Lydgate's gambling is a sign of his inability to handle unforeseen financial difficulties. In Middlemarch, Lydgate, Fred, and Mr. Farebrother use gambling to relieve themselves from debt or a shortage of money, and each of them must learn that money gained by responsible means is the only return that is morally acceptable.

Financial standing is inseparable from middle-class respectability in the Middlemarch community. Those like the Garths, who are short of money, are looked down upon with suspicion. In this provincial town, respectability is outwardly manifested in proper dress, according to the amount of money that one has.

Dorothea and Celia Brooke can afford to dress simply because overdressing would be a sign of crassness, while the more decorative clothing of Mrs. Bulstrode is in keeping with her position as the banker's wife and the mayor's sister. Rosamond's clothes reflect an expensive taste that is not proper in her aunt Bulstrode's opinion for a young lady whose financial prospects are not very hopeful.

Money as power is presented in two ways in Middlemarch: as control over the living by the living, and as a hold over the



living by the dead. Bulstrode is one of the most influential men in Middlemarch, and his power is made up of a combination of financial success and religiosity. For him the two are inseparable, and since his early life in business he has been "directing his prospects of 'instrumentality' towards the uniting of distinguished religious gifts with successful business" (LXI, 127). Although at first he had felt some guilt in his previous connection with a pawn-broker's business, he was able to rationalize this position: "His religious activity could not be incompatible with his business as soon as he had argued himself into not feeling it incompatible" (LXI, 129).

Throughout Middlemarch Bulstrode is respected for his power, which he uses as a general control over as many people as possible. It even extends to the lower classes where "he would take a great deal of pains about apprenticing Tegg, the shoemaker's son, and he would watch over Tegg's churchgoing" (XVI, 235). The community's response to Bulstrode is like Tulliver's to Lawyer Wakem in The Mill on the Floss.

From the time that Lydgate enters the community, he is associated with Bulstrode, but he tries to resist any financial obligation; in the end, however, the surgeon accepts a loan of a thousand pounds from Bulstrode and through the money becomes connected with the banker's dishonest actions. Bulstrode also uses his money to try to keep control over his wife's family, the Vincy's, whose reputation as an old Middlemarch family is greater





than the banker's. Because of his need for Bulstrode's backing, Mr. Vincy endures his moral criticism each time that he needs help. The characters of the two men come out when Mr. Vincy tries not to struggle under Bulstrode's yoke while the banker indicates his feelings about the extravagances of the Vincys. Mr. Vincy displays the common sinner's hatred for monied self-righteousness:

"I never professed to be anything but worldly; and what's more, I don't see anybody else who is not worldly. I suppose you don't conduct business on what you call unworldly principles. The only difference that I see is that one worldliness is a little bit honester than another." (XIII, 194)

The financial power that has allowed Bulstrode to assume a place in Middlemarch society has been operative since his early life, when he originally bribed Raffles to conceal the secret of Will's mother. The power of money does not work with Raffles, however, when he is too ill to care, and it fails to work with Will Ladislaw who rejects any compensation for Bulstrode's crime against him. Denying money's ability to purchase honour, Will declares,

"My unblemished honour is important to me. It is important to me to have no stain on my birth and connections. And now I find there is a stain which I can't help. My mother felt it, and tried to keep as clear of it as she could, and so will I. You shall keep your ill-gotten money....I can refuse it." (LXI, 140)

When the efficacy of his money fails, Bulstrode loses control and weeps. At this point, the full realization comes to him that when money fails, respectability crumbles, and the victims of his power in Middlemarch are all too ready to turn on him. With the loss





of his respectability, Bulstrode believes that he has no longer the influence for God that he had imagined as his life's work.

In contrast with Bulstrode's use of money to maintain respectability and to work for what he defines as God's purpose is Peter Featherstone's pleasure in ruling his relatives by monetary means. His greatest joy is in the thought of the consternation of his family when his will is read. In his mind, rule after death is even more important than the power that he has over people while he lives, and his own moral rectitude is relatively unimportant to him. This use of money through a will to control other people is seen ironically after Featherstone dies:

In writing the programme for his burial he certainly did not make clear to himself that his pleasure in the little drama of which it formed a part was confined to anticipation. In chuckling over the vexations he could inflict by the rigid clutch of his dead hand, he inevitably mingled his consciousness with that livid stagnant presence, and so far as he was preoccupied with a future life, it was one of gratification inside his coffin.

(XXIV, 77)

Featherstone's use of the will as a means of control in life is like that of the Dodsons in The Mill on the Floss, who expect their nieces and nephews to be grateful for the money promised to them. Like Bulstrode, Featherstone succeeds partially in his attempts to rule the living by forcing all his relatives to do just as he wishes. Fred Vincy is kept in fear and hope continually by signs of good or bad omens about his expectations. Peter's egoism demands such dependence on him, and he fails only with Caleb Garth, who does not mind being poor and who makes him feel



uncomfortable, and with Mary Garth, who like Will Ladislaw does not live by the rules of money and power and who refuses to accept Peter's bribe to help him in his wish for power. She defies his order to destroy one of the two wills that he has made, her words echoing Will's indignant reply to Bulstrode: "I will not let the close of your life soil the beginning of mine" (XXXIII, 68). In the struggle between financial power and moral strength in Middlemarch, the latter usually wins, but with Lydgate, when that strength fails to exert itself, disaster occurs.

The consequences of the use of money solely for the purposes of power are seen most ironically in the story of Peter Featherstone. His hopes for a mocking control of his relatives after his death through the establishment of his natural son on his property are dashed when the son turns out to be as mercenary as he. Shortly after Featherstone's death, the old man's property is sold and his son fulfils his lifelong ambition to become a money-changer; he carries on the tradition of power and money by indulging his wish to get a place "on a much-frequented quay, to have locks all round him of which he held the keys, and to look sublimely cool as he handled the breeding coins of all nations, while helpless Cupidity looked at him enviously from the other side of an iron lattice" (LII, 377). The Featherstone land goes to Bulstrode, whom Peter had scorned as "a speckilating fellow" (XII, 165). Although his character differs markedly from Bulstrode's, and his motives for grasping power are different, the ultimate





disappointment of Featherstone's attempts at control is the same as Bulstrode's. Both of them have tainted money and use it for wrong ends, and the purpose of each is eventually defeated.

Casaubon, who has neither Bulstrode's respectability nor Featherstone's mercenary outlook, is linked to both of them in his attempts to control Will Ladislaw and Dorothea Brooke through money. Like the other two men, he has an ego which is nourished, in part, by Will's dependence on him for financial support. It is a blow to Casaubon when Will declares his independence and decides to earn his own living, but he still tries, nevertheless, as Featherstone does, to exert power through his will; Casaubon attempts to control Dorothea's life after he is dead, a control that has failed during his life. Like Bulstrode, he rationalizes the manifestation of power by telling himself that it is for Dorothea's good that he is stipulating the forfeiture of her inheritance if she marries Will. His deeper reason is his gnawing jealousy of the two young people and the feeling that his wife will easily respond to Will's liveliness and charm. He fears the loss of her loyalty and concern, and he even tries to bind her to a promise of carrying on his futile work after he is dead. Casaubon fails in his attempts to control Dorothea, however, for her nature does not allow the dead to supersede the living.

In all of their endeavours to gain power through money, Featherstone, Bulstrode and Casaubon do not succeed because they have too much confidence in money's ability to overcome scruples





or to rule the actions of the people that they are trying to control. The lives of Will, Mary and Dorothea, like those of Adam Bede, Romola and Felix Holt, which are not based on money and its power, provide a far more hopeful outlook than those such as Tito Melema in Romola and Harold Transome in Felix Holt, whose hopes depend on money.

Money and respectability are integrally connected in the community of Middlemarch; there is no differentiation between the two, for this society believes that where there is money there is respectability, and where it is missing, respectability also is absent. It is evident in outward appearances, such as one's possessions and clothing, and there are fine shades in the way in which each level of respectability manifests itself. In the clothes that women wear, for example, there is an indication of their respective stations: Celia and Dorothea can afford to wear simple dress, but such dress on Mrs. Bulstrode would be looked upon as affectation. Mrs. Bulstrode dresses well because she is the banker's wife and a Vincy, but there is a conflict within her between the free-spending Vincy character which demands ostentation and the severity of her husband's religion which expects a corresponding severity of dress. In the final analysis, as we learn from her female friends, the Vincy side usually wins. After Bulstrode's disgrace becomes public, Mrs. Toller says, "She was with her girls at church yesterday, and they had new Tuscan bonnets. Her own had a feather in it. I have never seen that her religion made any difference in her dress." (LXXIV, 324)





Her friend, Mrs. Plymdale, finds it necessary to defend Mrs.

Bulstrode:

"She wears very neat patterns always," said Mrs. Plymdale, a little stung. "And that feather I know she got dyed a pale lavender on purpose to be consistent. I must say it of Harriet that she wishes to do right." (LXXIV, 324-5)

Because she equates respectability with clothes, Mrs.

Bulstrode's actions after she learns of the disgrace show a special strength of character as well as a close sympathy between her and her husband. She shuts herself in her room "to sob out her farewell to all the gladness and pride of her life," and when she is ready to meet her husband,

she prepared herself by some little acts which might seem mere folly to a hard onlooker; they were her way of expressing to all spectators visible or invisible that she had begun a new life in which she embraced humiliation. She took off all her ornaments and put on a plain black gown, and instead of wearing her much-adorned cap and large bows of hair, she brushed her hair down and put on a plain bonnet-cap, which made her look suddenly like an early Methodist. (LXXIV, 334)

It is because of Mrs. Bulstrode's consciousness about money and propriety that she feels the incorrectness of Rosamond's extravagant upbringing when the Vincys' income does not allow for it. On one visit, Mrs. Bulstrode "was herself handsomely dressed, but she noticed with a little more regret than usual that Rosamond who...met her in walking dress, was almost as expensively equipped" (XXXI, 35). Similarly, while Dorothea's passionate love of beauty responds to her mother's jewels, her restraint and sense of morality tell her that this is an incorrect response, and she translates her feeling into religious terms:





"How beautiful these gems are! ...It is strange how deeply colours seem to penetrate one, like a scent. I suppose that is the reason why gems are used as spiritual emblems in the Revelation of St. John. They look like fragments of heaven. I think that emerald is more beautiful than any of them." (I, 17)

Dorothea's feeling is contrasted with that of her younger sister, Celia, who is less concerned with propriety in wearing jewels, and who has her own opinion: "I am sure--at least I trust, ...that the wearing of a necklace will not interfere with my prayers" (I, 19).

To others, notably Rosamond and Lydgate, expensive household furniture indicates respectability. Lydgate's idealism is strong, but his

tendency was not toward extreme opinions: he would have liked no bare-footed doctrines, being particular about his boots: he was no radical in relation to anything but medical reform and the prosecution of discovery. In the rest of practical life he walked by hereditary habit. (XXXVI, 114)

As the refined daughter of an influential manufacturer, Rosamond shares with Lydgate a fastidiousness about the outright mention of money, and the financial problems that they face are caused partially by their reticence in any discussion of either one's monetary position. Because it is not genteel to mention money, Rosamond blushes when her mother comments on Lydgate's finances, and Lydgate turns the subject to save Rosamond's embarrassment. When Mr. Vincy announces his intention to inquire into the prospects of his future son-in-law, Rosamond dissuades him, and the two young people enter marriage expecting each other to have money. Even when their monetary problems become pressing,



Lydgate refuses to mention the subject, and the final blow to Rosamond is that much greater. Where money is looked upon as soiling one, as with the Lydgates, a completely unrealistic attitude develops. In the Garth household, which is not respectable according to Middlemarch standards, the sharing of money problems brings mental comfort and trust.

In Middlemarch, respectability increases in relation to the way in which an individual earns his living; working with one's hands, like Caleb Garth, is not acceptable, but living off the earnings of property and tenants is. Even an aristocratic background like Lydgate's does not exempt him from having his profession regarded by his wife as "not quite respectable," and when Dorothea gives up her money to marry Will, she loses much of her esteem in the eyes of Middlemarch society.

Although Dorothea is conscious of respectability, her main concern with money is that it should be used as a way of bettering the lives of the poor. Her idealism reveals itself early in the novel, when she declares to her uncle that

"it is better to spend money in finding out how men can make the most of the land which supports them all, than in keeping dogs and horses only to gallop over it. It is not a sin to make yourself poor in performing experiments for the good of all. (II, 21-2)

Dorothea's feelings are correct, but she discovers that putting them into practice is difficult. Her scheme for Sir James' cottage does not need her money, and her uncle takes a long time to carry out any reform projects on his land. When she has





Casaubon's money, some of it goes into the doomed fever hospital, while the community project she thinks of establishing is too costly and has to be dropped. Even the thousand pounds given to Lydgate cannot change his position, and Dorothea finally learns, like Esther Lyon in Felix Holt, that in order to accomplish anything she must rid herself of her money.

Dorothea's interference in the economics of other people's lives becomes almost as ineffectual as the attempts of Bulstrode, Featherstone and Casaubon to determine the actions of others. Like Romola, her influence for good through her moral example is much more successful, as is evident in her ability to turn Sir James and ultimately Mr. Brooke to doing good for their tenants. She has a lasting effect on Rosamond, who "never uttered a word in depreciation of Dorothea, keeping in religious remembrance the generosity which had come to her aid in the sharpest crisis of her life" (Finale, 460-1). The generosity which impresses itself on Rosamond's shallow mind has nothing to do with money.

Dorothea's character has its greatest influence on Will Ladislaw, and although she originally wishes to help him financially, she ends by influencing him to be morally good and to develop a character almost as admirable as hers.

Mr. Brooke and Sir James Chettam present a contrast in relation to money and the good that it is able to do; their characters and attitudes help to establish their actions with money. Although Mr. Brooke is a "skinflint," his tendency toward





reform becomes more admirable and more constructive than the patronizing attitude of Sir James. Muddleheaded as Mr. Brooke is, he ultimately sees clearly, with the help of Dorothea and Caleb Garth, that reform must begin on his own land and extend outward. Sir James' conservatism seems destined to end his reform at the perimeter of his estates. Mrs. Cadwallader, too, whose husband has liberal ideas like Mr. Brooke, is grouped with Sir James when there is a question of how to spend money. Much of her pride rests on the fact that she has come from a monied background and her good works are confined to patronizing the tenants.

The overall failure of money to do good in Middlemarch rests on the fact that to be of significant use it must be earned. Money supplied by chance, as we have seen in Romola, has a taint on it that makes it fatal for many people; furthermore, the gain made by another's loss, as we shall see more fully in Daniel Deronda, is a moral crime that must be paid for.

Gambling in Middlemarch is an indication of character in Fred Vincy, Lydgate and Mr. Farebrother. The two younger men hold similar attitudes towards money: they believe that it is their natural due. Fred's approach to gambling is different from Lydgate's, although it stems from similar attitudes:

[Fred] had only the tendency to that diffusive form of gambling which has no alcoholic intensity, but is carried on with the healthiest chyle-fed blood, keeping up a joyous imaginative activity which fashions events according to desire, and having no fears about its own weather, sees only the advantage there must be to others in going aboard with it. Hopefulness has a pleasure in making a throw of any kind, because the prospect of



success is certain; and only a more generous pleasure in offering as many as possible a share in the stake. Fred liked play...and he only liked it better because he wanted money and hoped to win.  
(XXIII, 358-9)

Fred's gambling is also evident in his reactions in everyday living where his hopefulness leads him to believe that Featherstone will leave him his fortune. His total concern with money is based on his expectations, and his position is somewhat like that of Arthur Donnithorne in Adam Bede.

Lydgate looks on gambling contemptuously, but circumstances bring him to take a chance once; as a man who has held too optimistic expectations, his hopes rise as he wins, and

visions were gleaming on him of going the next day to Brassing where there was gambling on a grander scale to be had, and where, by one powerful snatch at the devil's bait, he might carry it off without the hook. and buy his rescue from his daily solicitings. (LXVI, 210)

For Lydgate, gambling acts as an escape from his problems, as well as providing temporary hope. His need to retain the old ways of living causes him to take risks and to lower himself in a fashion that would revolt him otherwise. The gambling scene is an indication, too, of the strain that Rosamond puts on Lydgate and of the depths to which he may sink with continual pressure. As the author says, "A philosopher fallen to betting is hardly distinguishable from a Philistine under the same circumstances" (LXVII, 221). Fred Vincy and Tertius Lydgate have begun with great expectations and both of them lose their hopes; their gamble indicates temporary avoidance of the responsibility that each of them must finally face.





Mr. Farebrother, the Vicar of St. Botolph's, unlike Fred and Lydgate, gambles steadily each time he plays whist in order to supplement his poor income. He is neither irresponsible nor hopeful in the sense that Fred is when he gambles, but the Vicar finds that he is not able to refrain from gambling because of the money. In Mr. Farebrother's case, money does do good, for after Lydgate has persuaded Dorothea to give Casaubon's vacant living to the clergyman, Mr. Farebrother is able to say to him,

"It's rather a strong check to one's self-complacency to find out how much of one's right doing depends on not being in want of money....I have no need to hang on the smiles of chance now."

(LXIII, 170-1)

All of the men leave off gambling, but for different reasons. Fred learns that he can earn money by working hard, and at the same time gain Mary's respect; Mr. Farebrother has enough money and also takes on further responsibility; Lydgate sees the futility of gambling almost immediately after his lapse, and he attempts to solve his financial problems by other means. They all learn that gambling does not provide the answers to their problems, and each of them becomes better and gains through avoiding this play with chance.

Gambling is implied in the way that several characters face up to the crises in their lives. Bulstrode gambles in his bribery of Raffles and Lydgate, and in his attempts to bribe Will; Rosamond takes chances in going against her husband's wishes when she tries to help relieve them of debt; and Casaubon and Featherstone





gamble in attempting to rule over others through their wills. Like Arthur Donnithorne in Adam Bede and Tito Melema in Romola, they all face ultimate loss.

In contrast to those who take chances and who try to gain at the expense of others are the members of a small group of people who realize the necessity of earning their living without doing injury to others. The Garth family is the standard by which others in the novel are judged, particularly in their attitudes towards money. Just as Mr. Vincy's materialism and indulgence turn Fred and Rosamond into financial snobs, so Mr. and Mrs. Garth's sensible and morally sound monetary ideas create a daughter who realizes the value of money and sees it as secondary to good human relationships. To the Garths, the comforts and outward signs of money are much less important than love and independence of financial concerns; money is important for clothing, food and the establishment of their children in useful careers. It is neither an end in itself to the Garths nor a means to power and respectability, and financial reward is subordinated to peace of mind and moral rectitude.

The Garths' attitude, which most closely resembles Adam Bede's, places them in opposition to several people in the community, and this is partially a cause of their poor financial circumstances. Caleb's refusal to work for Bulstrode, like Adam Bede's refusal to work for Squire Donnithorne, indicates the importance that he places on his personal integrity over any wish for money. Just as Bulstrode cannot separate money and religion, Caleb cannot divide



business and morality. His response to Bulstrode's plea for him to keep working reveals his outlook:

"I would injure no man if I could help it," said Caleb; "even if I thought God winked at it. I hope I should have feeling for my fellow-creature. But, sir--I am obliged to believe that this[man] has told me the truth. And I can't be happy in working with you, or profiting by you. It hurts my mind." (LXIX, 249)

Bulstrode's God does wink at the injuries which he has given, and his moral standards place him in direct opposition to Caleb. Because of the Garths' feeling about earning a living, they receive rewards in the end through Caleb's returning respect in the community and enough financial prosperity to assure their future.

Classed with the Garths in relation to money as something which must be earned is Will Ladislaw, who like Fred Vincy, learns that financial dependence on others is wrong, and that in order to be worthy of Dorothea he must find a way of earning his own living. Will, however, does not belong to the working group of Adam Bede, Felix Holt, and Caleb Garth. Like Daniel Deronda and Philip Wakem, Will is exempted from having to work with his hands; he has a greater task as "an ardent public man, working well in those times when reforms were begun with a young hopefulness of immediate good" (Finale, 461). Will is rewarded for his moral strength in refusing Bulstrode's bribe and in renouncing Dorothea when he believes that his advances will injure her. In the end he receives Dorothea's love and happily fulfils his role as a political reformer. Will, the Garths and Fred find fulfilment in work and in being of use to others, and they resist the immoral effects of unearned money.





## CHAPTER VII

### DANIEL DERONDA

The setting of Daniel Deronda is different from that of any of the other novels; with the exception of the Meyricks' parlour and the Cohens' shop, the story of Gwendolen Harleth and Daniel Deronda takes place in the upper class society of England. Because of the difference in setting, there is a different approach to money in most cases. Many of the characters closely resemble people in the earlier novels: Gwendolen is a livelier, more clever Rosamond, whose marriage to wealth is fulfilled; Daniel is an aristocratic Felix Holt with a greater cause; and Grandcourt has the wish for power and the lack of conscience of Tito Melema. All of these comparisons are simplified, but they do show that George Eliot carries through several themes in relation to money and character in her novels.

Unlike Middlemarch, Daniel Deronda de-emphasizes the importance of a particular community in respect to financial relationships. Instead, it emphasizes the lack of contact between people in different areas of society when they do come together, and we see their different financial attitudes. Characters like Gwendolen Harleth and Mirah are brought in contact with each other to show dissimilarities more than likenesses. Quite often, however, it is partially an involvement with money that affects people's meetings and the way they respond to each other. For most of the study of





Daniel Deronda, I will focus attention on Gwendolen Harleth, because her character presents the most interesting and most important effects of money, jewellery and gambling that are to be found in the novel.

Gwendolen Harleth appears first at the gambling tables of Leubronn. This is one of the most significant scenes in the novel because it is a clear portrayal of her character and provides a microcosmic view of her attitudes about life. In Gwendolen we find a tendency towards the kind of gambling that George Eliot discusses in Middlemarch, when she looks at the gambling of Fred Vincy and Tertius Lydgate. Gwendolen takes chances with an "alcoholic intensity" (Middlemarch, XXIII, 358) which is also found in Tito Melema. In the gambling scene, winning is particularly pleasing to her because she has the feeling that this will bring meaning into her dull existence. She has "visions of being followed by a cortège who would worship her as a goddess of luck and watch her play as a directing augury" (I, 8). This idea is satisfying to Gwendolen because her ego requires the full attention and even worship of those around her; it also demands that she appear unaffected by the opinions of such people and that they should have no indication of how much their adulation means to her. This characteristic is one of the governing factors in the actions which Gwendolen takes throughout the novel, particularly in relation to the problems that face her in her marriage.

When Gwendolen begins to lose at gambling, her reaction is



similar to her attitude towards losing in any area of her life.

"Since she was not winning strikingly, the next best thing was to lose strikingly" (I, 9). Whether she wins or loses, she does it in a manner that she feels to be admirable. "In Gwendolen's habit of mind it had been taken for granted that she knew what was admirable and that she herself was admired" (I, 10). Her relationships with her mother and everyone else are all affected by this belief, and only when she begins to see that her ideas are false does Gwendolen's character achieve real growth.

Because of the peculiar kind of gambling that she follows in reference to the important events in her life, Gwendolen's actions and decisions are never certain until she has plunged fully into them. On the surface, Gwendolen would appear to be vacillating rather than decisive, but she is capable of making up her mind. In part, her last-minute decisions make her life more exciting for her, and they partially prevent anyone from having a hold over her through any predictability of action. Even when Grandcourt binds her, she often takes chances with him and his contempt in order to provide herself with some feeling of freedom, although each gamble that she takes with her husband leads only to her losing strikingly.

Money itself has many meanings for Gwendolen, and the meanings change as her character develops. At first its essential use is bound up with her egotistic demands. The title of the introductory book of Daniel Deronda, "The Spoiled Child," is a direct ref-





erence to Gwendolen's position within her family and her society. Most of the money that her mother, Mrs. Davilow, possesses is used in providing comforts and adornment for Gwendolen. At this stage money means very little to her as long as she has everything that she wants for her own comfort. In describing Gwendolen and her demands, George Eliot says that

she was the princess in exile, who in time of famine was to have her breakfast-roll made of the finest-bolted flour from the seven thin ears of wheat, and in general decampment was to have her silver fork kept out of the baggage. (IV, 55)

When Gwendolen gambles, part of her ability to appear unaffected by her loss can be traced to the belief that she can do without the money. The change that begins to occur very slowly has its roots in the letter that Mrs. Davilow writes to her daughter about their bankruptcy, and which Gwendolen receives immediately after her loss of the gambling money. The contrast between Gwendolen's egotistic disregard for money as a useful thing and her mother's distress because of poverty points out the callous aspect of Gwendolen's character.

Lack of money is associated in Gwendolen's mind with dreariness, small houses and the absence of a horse to ride. When her family loses its money, she eventually comes to realize that it means much more; without money her whole way of living is threatened and she must adjust her thinking. Like Rosamond, she does not believe this at first, but Gwendolen does not intend to leave things without trying something. Her belief that she can become an





actress, however, is a futile gesture, as is Rosamond's begging letter to Lydgate's uncle. The result of Gwendolen's interview with Klesmer is the first thorough blow to her egoism.

After the interview, Gwendolen sinks into a comparatively passive acceptance of the fact that they are poor and must remain so. In all her feelings about poverty at this time she is her own central concern, and it becomes obvious that her selfishness is not to be changed quickly into a selfless sacrifice for her family. In essence, her attitude echoes that of Rosamond when poverty comes upon her. Gwendolen's troubles "had in her opinion all been caused by other people's disagreeable or wicked conduct; and there was really nothing pleasant to be counted on in the world" (XXIV, 409). Her character does not allow for the healing aspect of work to alleviate any of her cares, as it would for someone like Mary Garth or Dinah Morris. As far as Gwendolen is concerned, "for a lady to become a governess--to 'take a situation'--was to descend in life and to be treated at best with a compassionate patronage" (XXIV, 410). This idea is entirely oppressive to Gwendolen and she comes to attach the idea of poverty with a slavery into which she must enter; to her independent and egocentric character this is the worst fate that could happen.

When Gwendolen realizes that Grandcourt is going to propose to her in spite of the fact that she has previously run away from any alliance with him, she faces a moral crisis which is to be decided by financial necessity. Gwendolen is torn between her reali-



zation of the burden which would be lifted by a wealthy marriage and her knowledge of the immorality of accepting Grandcourt with her full awareness of the situation between him and Mrs. Glasher, his mistress. All of the fluctuations in her mind, along with the need for money result in Gwendolen's acceptance of Grandcourt. In effect, Gwendolen sells herself to save her mother and herself from the threatened life of poverty.

In her own eyes, Gwendolen is fulfilling the role that has been destined for her. Gwendolen's morality is displaced by an aesthetic sense of her own, in which she, as a beautiful object, must have the surroundings that most complement her, so that for her poverty is a sin, a degradation into which she must not fall. She sees herself as a work of art, but she does not realize the consequences of such an attitude, and after her marriage with Grandcourt, when he treats her as an object to be put on display she discovers that she would rather be treated as a person.

An immediate picture of the luxurious life ahead is present in Grandcourt's horses: "They were the symbols of command and luxury, in delightful contrast with the ugliness of poverty and humiliation at which she had lately been looking close" (XXVII, 43). The idea of "command" indicates another aspect of Gwendolen's character, and one that is closely tied up with her egoism. To Gwendolen, the admiration of others has always meant that she rules over them. The need to govern has been a part of her wishes for the future more than any desire to marry; she has seen that without money she will be sub-





ject to others, and it is this facet of poverty that she rebels against most strongly. When she accepts Grandcourt, he immediately appeals to this characteristic in Gwendolen by saying, "You shall have whatever you like" (XXVII, 42), and before he leaves, she exercises her prerogative by asking him to get rid of his companion, Lush, whom Gwendolen detests. This is the kind of power that she likes to exert and she sees a future which, although marred by the thought of Mrs. Glasher, presents a vision of the

brilliant position she had longed for, the imagined freedom she would create for herself in marriage, the deliverance from the dull insignificance of her girlhood. (XXVIII, 51)

Until her marriage, Gwendolen has had little happen to shake her belief in herself and in the power of money in helping her to maintain her need for admiration and power. Klesmer disturbs her belief only temporarily, and Daniel Deronda's obvious disapproval of her and his repurchase of her necklace leave her with a "confused state of emotion...--was it wounded pride and resentment, or a certain awe and exceptional trust?" (XXIV, 415). In her mind, Daniel is connected with her gambling, and throughout her marriage he looks on at her one great gamble with the same mixture of pity and disapproval.

Because Gwendolen has broken her promise to Mrs. Glasher not to deprive her son of the estates that Grandcourt possesses, she develops an acute conscience about depriving others in terms of gain and loss. She believes that Daniel is Sir Hugo Mallinger's natural son and that the Mallinger property should have gone to Daniel rather





than to Grandcourt. After Gwendolen marries, the necklace that Deronda has saved for her takes on a special meaning. When Daniel explains to her his objections to gambling as a means whereby one gains from another's loss, Gwendolen immediately identifies it with her actions in depriving Mrs. Glasher and her son of the estates. The whole idea of gain and loss becomes an obsession with Gwendolen, and she tries to rationalize her actions over and over again, particularly in her private conversations with Daniel. The irrevocability of her situation haunts her, and she tells Daniel, "I have thrust out others--I have made my gain out of their loss--tried to make it--tried. And I must go on. I can't alter it" (XXXVI, 264).

This drastic change in Gwendolen is painful to her and has completely altered her attitude to money. There is still an unconscious, inbred acceptance of money as part of the life which she continues to lead. The consciousness of the wealth behind her and of the slight aid that clothes give her in carrying on her role as a rich, pampered wife allows her to exist from day to day, but inwardly money has become detestable as the payment for her soul. Her character cannot help but change under such circumstances, and she begins to humble herself while she maintains her outer shell of pride.

In marriage, gambling takes on a new light for Gwendolen, as does her idea of power over men. Her husband has made both of her girlish dreams a mockery and a horror to her, and Lush's rev-



elations about the provisions of Grandcourt's will, which leaves almost everything to his mistress and her son, provide Gwendolen with a new view of the outgrowths of her dying egoism. A new awareness shows her that her existence "was all a part of that new gambling in which the losing was not simply a minus, but a terrible plus that had never entered into her reckoning" (XLVIII, 81). Her gamble has committed her to a course which offers nothing but one humiliation after another, all for the sake of a financially secure life as Grandcourt's possession. Lush's inner comment about the situation is applicable to Gwendolen's feeling about her marriage at this point: "She didn't know what would be the charge for that superfine article, Henleigh Grandcourt" (XLVIII, 85). Like Gwendolen, Grandcourt is a work of art that has been particularly appealing to Gwendolen before their marriage. The punishment in Gwendolen's marrying Grandcourt is partially ironic because earlier she had paid him her highest compliment; she had said that he was not disgusting. Now she feels nothing but disgust for the "superfine article."

It is because she must pay over and over that Gwendolen's attitude about money changes, but now she can think of it only with feelings of guilt, and she slowly becomes a passive creature who is only a shadow of the girl who existed before her marriage.

Power, too, takes on a new aspect for Gwendolen and changes her character from one of confidence to quiescence: "Any romantic illusions she had had in marrying this man had turned on her power





of using him as she liked. He was using her as he liked" (XLVIII, 80-1). Much of her inactivity is prompted by the knowledge that she has gone into the marriage with guilt already on her; she has made a contract with Grandcourt, and "her capability of rectitude told her again and again that she had no right to complain of her contract, or to withdraw from it" (XLVIII, 89). Gwendolen's greatest alteration in character is brought about by the increasing oppressiveness of Grandcourt's power. She develops a hatred of him that intensifies into a wish for his death, but the "power of tyranny in him seemed a power of living in the presence of any wish that he should die" (XLVIII, 94). For the first time in her life, Gwendolen fears her own feelings, and the change is most clearly shown in her plea to Daniel to help her: "I want not to get worse. I should like to be what you wish. There are people who are good and enjoy great things--I know there are. I am a contemptible creature" (XLVIII, 99). The transformation from the girl who had exercised her power over Grandcourt to this cowering, fearful woman is a result of the combination of the need for power and money, neither of which has meaning for her any longer.

In the course of the novel, jewellery takes on a significance in relation to Gwendolen which has not been found in any of the other works. The turquoise necklace and the meaning attached to it affect the conversation of Daniel and Gwendolen each time that they come into contact. It has several symbolic meanings: as a sign of Gwendolen's meaningless life; as a reminder of Daniel's disapproval of gambling;





and as a symbol of redemption for Gwendolen through Daniel. In its first two aspects, the necklace is at first a chastisement to Gwendolen and an offense to her egoism. Because of her feeling about it, Gwendolen keeps it thrust away in her jewel box, just as she refuses to acknowledge that any of her actions are not admirable. When she takes it out and later decides to keep it, it becomes a sign of changes in her character and her wish to know more about her inner self, particularly in relation to gambling. It provides the link that connects her with Daniel, and through him she finds self-realization and true independence.

The other important jewellery which is related to Gwendolen is the diamond necklace, owned by Grandcourt, worn by Mrs. Glasher, and sent by her to Gwendolen on her wedding night, with a note denouncing her for breaking her promise not to marry Grandcourt. The effect of such a gift on Gwendolen is terrifying, and the diamonds become inseparable from the curse which Mrs. Glasher has called down on Gwendolen. "Truly here were poisoned gems, and the poison had entered into this poor young creature" (XXXI, 124). They are gems from the serpent, and are part of the "Medusa-apparition" that Mrs. Glasher represents to Gwendolen, as well as recalling the serpent aspects of Grandcourt. To Gwendolen they are a symbol of Grandcourt's relations with Mrs. Glasher, and of his power over herself, for he forces her to wear the "poisoned diamonds" on the first public appearance after their marriage. The diamonds are inseparable from the words of Mrs. Glasher's note, and in wearing them Gwendolen



feels that the "words of the bad dream crawled about the diamonds still" (XXXV, 230). The diamonds are one of the first signs of Grandcourt's dominance, and the wearing of them tests Gwendolen's power to hide her suffering from the rest of the world. In that sense too they are a test of her strength of character.

Most important to Gwendolen of all the reminders attached to the necklace is the knowledge of her guilt in the broken promise to Mrs. Glasher. The words that crawl over the diamonds are the words of accusation that Gwendolen can never dispel:

"You had your warning. You have chosen to injure me and my children. He had meant to marry me. He would have married me at last, if you had not broken your word. You will have your punishment. I desire it with all my soul.... Shall you like to stand before your husband with these diamonds on you and these words of mine in his thoughts and yours? Will he think you have any right to complain when he has made you miserable? You took him with your eyes open. The willing wrong you have done me will be your curse." (XXXI, 123)

Jewellery other than the turquoises and the diamonds, with clothing and possessions, are all involved in Gwendolen's attitude towards money, and as her character alters, so does her feeling about them. Originally they are all signs of the power manifested by the woman who has beauty and wealth behind her. The ownership and riding of horses, too, is particularly important to an understanding of Gwendolen's need for power; for just as she holds the reins of the horse and controls it, so she intends to control Grandcourt and all men, and this is indicated in images of her holding the reins. After her marriage, however, it is she who is controlled and her husband who "inwardly observed that she answered to





the rein" (XXXV, 203).

In a similar manner, Gwendolen has little choice in what jewellery, clothing or even scent she is to wear. At the height of her subjection to Grandcourt, she refuses to offend him in that way, and

curiously enough she rejected a handkerchief on which her maid had by mistake put the wrong scent--a scent that Grandcourt had once objected to. Gwendolen would not have liked to be an object of disgust to this husband whom she hated: she liked all disgust to be on her side. (XLVIII, 87)

This incident indicates the peculiar combination of submission and pride in Gwendolen's relationship with her husband, and it is because of this combination that she is unable to find any relief through the advice that Daniel gives her.

With Grandcourt's death, all relationships with money change for Gwendolen, the end result of a long period of trials for her. She submits herself wholly to Daniel's advice, and there is none of the old pride in her submission to him. Money is one of her prime concerns, for Grandcourt has left her two thousand pounds plus his mistress' house at Gadsmere. Because of the burden of guilt that she feels over having wished for Grandcourt's death, she does not want to accept his money. She also feels the curse of Grandcourt's tyranny in the legacy, the reaction that he would have wished her to have. Gwendolen's changed attitude and her reliance on Daniel is evident when she says,

"I asked you to come because I want you to tell me what I ought to do....Don't be afraid of telling me what you think is right, because it seems hard. I have made up my mind to it. I was afraid once of





being poor; I could not bear to think of being under other people; and that was why I did something--why I married. I have borne worse things now. I think I could bear to be poor, if you think I ought. (LXV, 340)

Gwendolen is at last aware of her true motives in marrying Grandcourt, and she is able to confront her weaknesses with Daniel's help and to face up to her past actions. As with so many other characters in the novels, Gwendolen can achieve nothing by complete renunciation; Daniel realizes this and advises Gwendolen to "abide by the provisions of your husband's will, and let your remorse tell only on the use that you will make of your monetary independence" (LXV, 343). To make her life worthwhile, Gwendolen must follow the path of Dorothea and Romola, so that she will be "among the best of women, such as make others glad that they were born" (LXV, 345). This last great effort that Gwendolen must make is the action that separates her completely from the Rosamond type of figure to whom she has been compared. Her strong character which found its delight in money and its power now turns towards money as a means of selfless duty.

Grandcourt's character is a combination of egoism and cruelty. Superficially he and Gwendolen seem to have much in common in their attitudes about money and in their response to the power that it affords, but Grandcourt's sixteen more years of experience than Gwendolen have given him time to develop into an unfeeling monster. His most characteristic reaction to money is one of indifference, but it is like his contemptuousness towards people;





both the money and the people must be present for the proper effect. Grandcourt's indifference gives him a careless attitude towards gambling and any other games of chance. At Leubronn he does not even know how much he has won, and it is not important, because he always wins. Grandcourt is sure of what he wants, and he nearly always gets it.

Power is the most important manifestation of money as far as Grandcourt is concerned, and his egoism demands that he have command over those who come near him. His holds over Lush and Gwendolen rest on a mutual need; Lush needs money, and Grandcourt needs him to take care of his unpleasant business:

The habit of fifteen years had made Grandcourt more and more in need of Lush's handiness, and Lush more and more in need of the lazy luxury to which his transactions on behalf of Grandcourt made no interruption worth reckoning. (XII, 189)

Grandcourt can do without Lush only for a short while until his need for someone to take care of bothersome tasks returns.

Gwendolen answers to her husband's exercise of power in a different way; because she has sold herself to him, she is totally under his domination. The relationship involves a contract in which there are gains on both sides, mostly, however, for Grandcourt. In his eyes, as in Gwendolen's, the contract is purely in terms of business, and Grandcourt does not interpret their marriage romantically:

He knew quite well that she had not married him--had not overcome her repugnance to certain facts--out of love to him personally; he had won her by the rank and luxuries he had to give her, and these she had got: he had fulfilled his side of the contract. (LIV, 189)





In power Grandcourt finds all the excitement that is necessary to him, and money is only a means of furthering the desire to rule. His influence extends from his dogs, to his servants, Lush, Gwendolen, and all the way to Sir Hugo Mallinger, the uncle whose estate falls to Grandcourt, and he glories in being able to make all of these objects of his power uncomfortable. Gwendolen sees this side of Grandcourt soon after her marriage, and points out his essential attitude towards his possessions, human or animal: "He delights in making the dogs and horses quail: that is half his pleasure in calling them his" (XXXV, 229).

For Grandcourt, money is of similar importance as an extension of pure egoism as it is to such varied people as Hetty Sorrel, Tito Melema and Rosamond Lydgate. His attitude is much more extreme than that of the other characters, and he carries it to its worst possibilities. Although we never see him in a situation in which real money problems arise, in the end Grandcourt finds himself in a position in which money means nothing and in which all the power that he has exercised cannot save him. Ironically, it is partially because he has kept his cruel hold over Gwendolen that she does not make an immediate effort to rescue him.

Daniel Deronda's character and most of his attitudes towards money are totally different from Gwendolen's and Grandcourt's; however, he is similar to them in one way, in his indifference to money. He has always been well off and well taken care of by Sir Hugo, but that is as far as the comparison can be carried. Daniel's





comfort has not been of importance to him, and we come to see that his happiness and peace of mind depend rather on good relationships with other people.

Daniel is first presented in the same gambling scene in which Gwendolen Harleth participates. The role of onlooker that he plays to her action is an indication of the same part that he is forced to take in her everyday life. We see the contrast in their characters in this scene, Daniel's disapproval differing markedly from Gwendolen's defiant pride. In other lives than Gwendolen's, Daniel is often the observer and the one who is placed unwillingly upon a pedestal. Hans Meyrick sees him in this way, as do the Meyrick sisters and even Mirah at first. As such an observer, Daniel does not gamble with his life as Gwendolen does, and he disapproves of those who do, as he tells her:

"There are enough inevitable turns of fortune which force us to see that our gain is another's loss: --that is only one of the ugly aspects of life. One would like to reduce it as much as one could, not get amusement out of exaggerating it. (XXIX, 90)

This is the essence of the lesson that Daniel finally teaches Gwendolen, that people must not live exclusively for their own profit, and Daniel's speeches give an indication that he belongs to the group of people in the novels who renounce money as a means of power or personal gratification.

Daniel's kindness is evident in the help that he gives to others, whether in a financial way, or more often, non-materially. When Gwendolen sells herself to give material comfort to her mother



and shows her love and her pride in the gesture, Daniel gives his time and his kind advice freely to Gwendolen. His sacrifice is at the same time a different and ultimately better one because it brings peace of mind rather than self-hatred.

Like Philip Wakem, and to some extent Will Ladislaw, Daniel is exempt from the kind of work that is important for characters such as Adam Bede and Caleb Garth; he has sufficient money and takes on a more important task than the others face. Daniel's role as leader of his people demands complete freedom from financial problems. His characteristic attitude to money and the things which come of it are indicated in a flashback to his childhood:

It is possible...to be fond of poverty and take it for a bride, to prefer scoured deal, red quarries, and whitewash for one's private surroundings, to...glory in having no privilege except such as nature insists on; and noblemen have been known to run away from elaborate ease and the option of idleness, that they might bind themselves for small pay to hard-handed labour. But Daniel's tastes were altogether in keeping with his nurture: his disposition was one in which everyday scenes and habits beget not ennui or rebellion, but delight, affection, aptitudes.

(XVI, 252-3)

For Daniel as a boy, comfort is related to the affection and love of human beings, not to the money that buys luxurious homes and furniture, and he does not change as an adult. This is why he can look at Gwendolen as she appears dressed to perfection and, seeing the sad eyes in her hard face, feel pity for her, while others see only the rich, haughty Mrs. Grandcourt. His sensitivity to Gwendolen is somewhat like Will Ladislaw's in relation to Dorothea, although Will's feeling of pity for Dorothea has a more personal basis.





Like Dorothea Brooke, Felix Holt and Romola, Daniel finds his true work in performing his duty; he becomes the leader in a Zionist movement after he discovers his Jewish parentage. When he finds this goal after his earlier drifting, Daniel shows his will more strongly than ever before. He tells the man who had been his grandfather's friend,

"I hold that my first duty is to my own people, and if there is anything to be done towards restoring or perfecting their common life, I shall make that my vocation." (LX, 275)

In his new state, Daniel finds that much of what he feels now and has experienced in his yearnings before has been an inheritance from his grandfather. He indicates this to Mordecai, who has been instrumental in helping him to find his vocation:

"It is you who have given shape to what, I believe, was an inherited yearning--the effect of brooding, passionate thoughts in many ancestors--thoughts that seem to have been intensely present in my grandfather....Since I began to read and know, I have always longed for some ideal task, in which I might feel myself the heart and brain of a multitude--some social captainship, which would come to me as a duty, and not be striven for as a personal prize." (LXIII, 315)

Inheritance contributes to the shaping of Daniel's character as it does to Harold Transome's and Mary Garth's, although in different ways.

Possessions are not important to Daniel, except as links with the past, in the way that Ryelands, the estate of Sir Hugo, is a connection with his happy childhood. The one possession that he finds of greatest significance to him is the trunk of documents that had belonged to his grandfather, and it is significant because it links him with his Jewish heritage and is a visible sign of duty to his people. This trunk and its contents are far more valuable to





him than any estate, horses or jewels could ever be.

Daniel sees money in a much more morally positive way than Grandcourt and Gwendolen view it, and this difference is indicated in Daniel's character and in his kindness and patience. His whole character growth in the novel is a preparation for the duty that he is to perform.

The other characters in the novel are significant to this discussion in so far as they illustrate the various themes of money, gambling, inheritance and possessions. The whole Jewish theme of the novel has an implicit relationship with money that is found particularly in reference to the Cohen family and to Mirah's father. Of the Cohens, Joan Bennett makes the following comment:

The Cohens, like the Dodsons, have a streak of vulgarity--both families attach undue importance to their possessions as tokens of wealth and therefore of worth--but the Cohen vulgarities are specifically Jewish.<sup>1</sup>

Their "specifically Jewish" qualities are the characteristics which Daniel dislikes in the Cohens when he believes that they are related to Mirah. He can accept their warmth and kindness, but he finds it difficult to overcome an abhorrence of their mercenary ways. His final acceptance of them is an indication of the growth of his character and the changes in his ideas.

The attitude to the pawnbroker's trade has changed in the novels since Middlemarch, where Will was ashamed of his connection with a "Jew pawnbroker." Ezra Cohen has the same view of his trade as Caleb Garth has of business, and there is no shame when he speaks



of it to Daniel:

"Well, sir, I've accommodated gentlemen of distinction--I'm proud to say it. I wouldn't exchange my business with any in the world. There's none more honourable, nor more charitable, nor more necessary for all classes....And I wouldn't be without a pawnshop, sir, to be the Lord Mayor. It puts you in connection with the world at large. I say it's like the Government revenue--it embraces the brass as well as the gold of the country." (XXXIII, 173)

With his pride in his work, Ezra Cohen is just as admirable within his setting as Adam Bede or Caleb Garth is in his, although the novelist's satiric remarks are an indication that she perhaps does not see Ezra's occupation in quite the same light as he does; however, she does not make the Jewish vulgarity any more deplorable than that of the Anglo-Saxon: "No shadow of a Suffering Race distinguished his vulgarity of soul from that of a prosperous pink-and-white huckster of the purest English lineage" (XXXIII, 174).

The effect of a background widely affected by monetary values is seen in the character of Ezra Cohen, and even his kindness is justified, as Deronda notes, "in the light of a calculation" (XXXIII, 188). In showing the Cohen family together in happy situations, George Eliot shows that a heritage steeped in the traditional values of the money-lender is not necessarily warped by a mercenary outlook.

The Meyrick family consists of four women who live in a poor way in order to help the one male member of the family, and their serious needle-work which provides them with part of their living is a realistic way of earning money in comparison with the





attempt of Mrs. Davilow and her daughters to embroider an altar cloth as a start towards making their living. The sensible attitude of the Meyricks towards money is a contrast with the poor management of the Davilows who must be guided entirely by Mr. Gascoigne. The Meyricks' cheerful acceptance of real poverty produces better and stronger characters than the Davilows' shabby-genteel ineffectualness. Although the Meyrick girls play a part in the novel almost as small as that of the Davilows, their individuality is much more evident, and they do not need another strong person to give them complete guidance. They work so that Hans may continue his studies, but they are not subject to his whims as the Davilow mother and girls are to Gwendolen's rule.

Money has special meanings for Mirah and Mordecai. Mirah has worked against the evil influence that money has had on her father, because his wish for it has degraded him; she herself has had to struggle to keep free of the degradation. Money has had little direct effect on her character with its inherent goodness, the legacy of her mother and brother, and after Daniel rescues her, she is concerned with money only as a means of "earning her bread." Mordecai's one concern about money is directed to the one who he feels is chosen to finish his task. That person must have money enough to free himself from physical cares while he leads the future movement, because this has been one of the factors that has prevented Mordecai from fulfilling his task. When Daniel meets this qualification, Mordecai's personal concern with money ends.





Mirah's simplicity of character and her acceptance of her Jewish background are reflected in her dress. In her lack of concern for appearance, she resembles Dinah Morris, and to a lesser extent, Dorothea Brooke. She also provides a contrast with the appearance of Gwendolen. To Daniel, the image of Mirah in her despair is "clear to him as an onyx cameo: the brown-black drapery, the white face with small, small features and dark, long-lashed eyes" (XVII, 281). This picture is a vivid contrast to the "Lamia beauty" (I, 11) of Gwendolen as he first sees her. In her singing performances, Mirah wears a simple black gown, of which she says, "This would be thought a very good stage-dress for me...in a part where I was to come on as a poor Jewess and sing to fashionable Christians" (XXXIX, 321). She feels no shame in being a poor Jewess, and her reaction to any criticism or to being under others is in direct contrast to the repugnance that Gwendolen feels when she is threatened with a similar position. Mirah is like Eppie Marner and Mary Garth in her acceptance of the economic position in which she finds herself. Mirah's father, Lapidoth, is the dissolute and evil Jew that Daniel fears he may find when he is searching for Mirah's brother; his character is completely different from Mirah's and Mordecai's, and it is affected by money in several ways. He is, and in his own words he says that he looks like "a broken-down mountebank" (LXII, 299). His feelings for his children are restricted to the financial help that they can give him, and in his first meeting with Mirah, after she has run away from him to



avoid being sold as a mistress, his first thought is for her purse. When he gets her money, his next thought and action are to gamble with it.

Lapidoth's gambling provides a comparison with that of Gwendolen at Leubronn. She sees it as a way to relieve boredom, to find excitement, but in Lapidoth it becomes a disease, which has been found in none of the other characters in the novels. George Eliot describes this real gambling in the following words:

The gambling appetite is more absolutely dominant than bodily hunger, which can be neutralised by an emotional or intellectual excitation; but the passion for watching chances--the habitual suspensive poise of the mind in actual or imaginary play--nullifies the susceptibility to other excitation. In its final, imperious stage, it seems the unjoyous dissipation of demons, seeking diversion on the burning marl of perdition. (LXVI, 350-1)

Lapidoth's character is affected wholly at this point by his unquenchable thirst for taking chances; he is like an alcoholic who can see only as far as the next drink. When he shams a reformed manner and comes to live with Mordecai and Mirah, he thinks continually of ways to get money and go back to gambling. His morality translates itself into terms of what is expedient for him:

To have opened a desk or drawer of Mirah's, and pocketed any bank-notes found there would have been to his mind a sort of domestic appropriation which had no disgrace in it. (LXVIII, 373)

Finally Lapidoth does resort to stealing Daniel's ring and leaving his children's lives.

Lapidoth's part in the story counteracts all of the excitement and glamour of gambling as it is seen by Gwendolen at Leubronn, and his worthless ways point to the harm and futility of a life in





which gain is always made through another's loss. Daniel's advice to Gwendolen and his assurance about the new moral view that she has developed point out the possibilities which are open to her for the beginning of a new life founded on her experiences:

"What makes life dreary is the want of motive; but once beginning to act with that penitential, loving purpose you have in your mind, there will be unexpected satisfactions--there will be newly-opening needs--continually coming to carry you on from day to day. You will find your life growing like a plant....You can, you will, be among the best of women, such as make others glad that they were born."  
(LXV, 344-5)





## CONCLUSION

To some people like Bulstrode and Jermy in George Eliot's novels, money means almost everything; to others, like Felix Holt and Adam Bede, it has very little meaning. Whatever the characters' attitudes, money and possessions are influences on their lives, and this thesis has endeavoured to show how thoroughly money and individual moral values are integrated in the novels. To George Eliot, the possession of wealth is not necessarily a reason for the condemnation of the individual who has it; what is important is its proper use, not for selfish or impossible schemes, but for the real benefit of one's fellow man. Money used to purchase power or to gain from another's loss is tainted and brings nothing but disaster to the man who possesses it.

Because money can be used for beneficial purposes, the total rejection of it does not always constitute the greatest good that man can achieve. Behind each person's choice of his money values is his moral conviction of what is important to him. To those like Lawyer Jermy, whose respectability within his community is of utmost consequence, money is indispensable, while to those like Felix Holt, whose honour and honesty outweigh financial goals, money is merely a by-product of hard work. Between these two extremes are the people like Mr. Farebrother, who finds a small amount of money to be a blessing; Mr. Brooke, who does the best he can with good intentions and a slight penny-pinching tendency; and



Daniel Deronda, who understands the value of money, as well as the importance of human relationships.

Like all the other aspects of the novels, those involving money indicate the scope of George Eliot's moral vision, and Barbara Hardy's summation of the novels as a whole can be applied to the monetary facets of these works:

She shows all the human variables: the successes as well as the failures, the mixed cases, even the unacted possible lives that haunt all our moral commitments. The result is moral definiteness, maybe, but it is also human movement. We are left with the impression, after reading one of her novels, that this is as close as the novelist can get to human multiplicity.<sup>1</sup>





## FOOTNOTES

### Introduction

<sup>1</sup>Lerner, The Truthtellers, 86.

<sup>2</sup>Haight, The George Eliot Letters, III, 69.

<sup>3</sup>All quotations from the works of George Eliot are taken from the Cabinet Edition (1878). References will be given by chapter and page number following the quotation, except for The Mill on the Floss, where they will be given by book, chapter and page number.

### Chapter I

<sup>1</sup>In spite of Adam's practicality, his attraction to Hetty shows that there is a side of him which is drawn to beauty like hers, and it is this attraction that blinds him to her faults.

<sup>2</sup>Ames, Introduction to The Ethics of George Eliot's Works by John Crombie Brown, vii-ix.

<sup>3</sup>Both Daniel and Will do receive seven hundred pounds, but this is treated as an unimportant aspect. Daniel receives news of his money towards the end of the novel, and Will's is an after-thought of Dorothea. Their attitudes towards money are indifferent. See Middlemarch, III, 427, and Daniel Deronda, I, 263.

<sup>4</sup>Levine, "Determinism and Responsibility in the Works of George Eliot," PMLA, LXXVII (1962), 272.

### Chapter II

<sup>1</sup>Thale, The Novels of George Eliot, 47-8.

<sup>2</sup>Eliot, The Mill on the Floss, I, 16-7.

<sup>3</sup>Lerner, The Truthtellers, 126.

<sup>4</sup>In this I am in disagreement with W. Naumann in "The Architecture of George Eliot's Novels," MLQ, IX (1948), when he generalizes about the thoughts of the nineteenth century. Naumann says, "What was more noble to the nineteenth-century mind...than the renunciation of this highest good--money!" (p. 45). To George Eliot, money is not the highest good in itself, nor does she advocate the





renunciation of it as the highest good for all her characters. Her attitude, and those of her characters towards money is much more complex than Naumann seems to suggest.

#### Chapter V

<sup>1</sup>Thomson, "The Legal Plot in Felix Holt," Studies in English Literature, VII (1967), 695.

#### Chapter VII

<sup>1</sup>Bennett, George Eliot: Her Mind and Her Art, 89.

#### Conclusion

<sup>1</sup>Hardy, The Novels of George Eliot, 237-8.



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### Abbreviations

<u>ELH</u> :	<u>Journal of English Literary History</u>
<u>MFS</u> :	<u>Modern Fiction Studies</u>
<u>MLN</u> :	<u>Modern Language Notes</u>
<u>MLQ</u> :	<u>Modern Language Quarterly</u>
<u>MLR</u> :	<u>Modern Language Review</u>
<u>PMLA</u> :	<u>Publications of the Modern Language Association</u>
<u>RES</u> :	<u>Review of English Studies</u>

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